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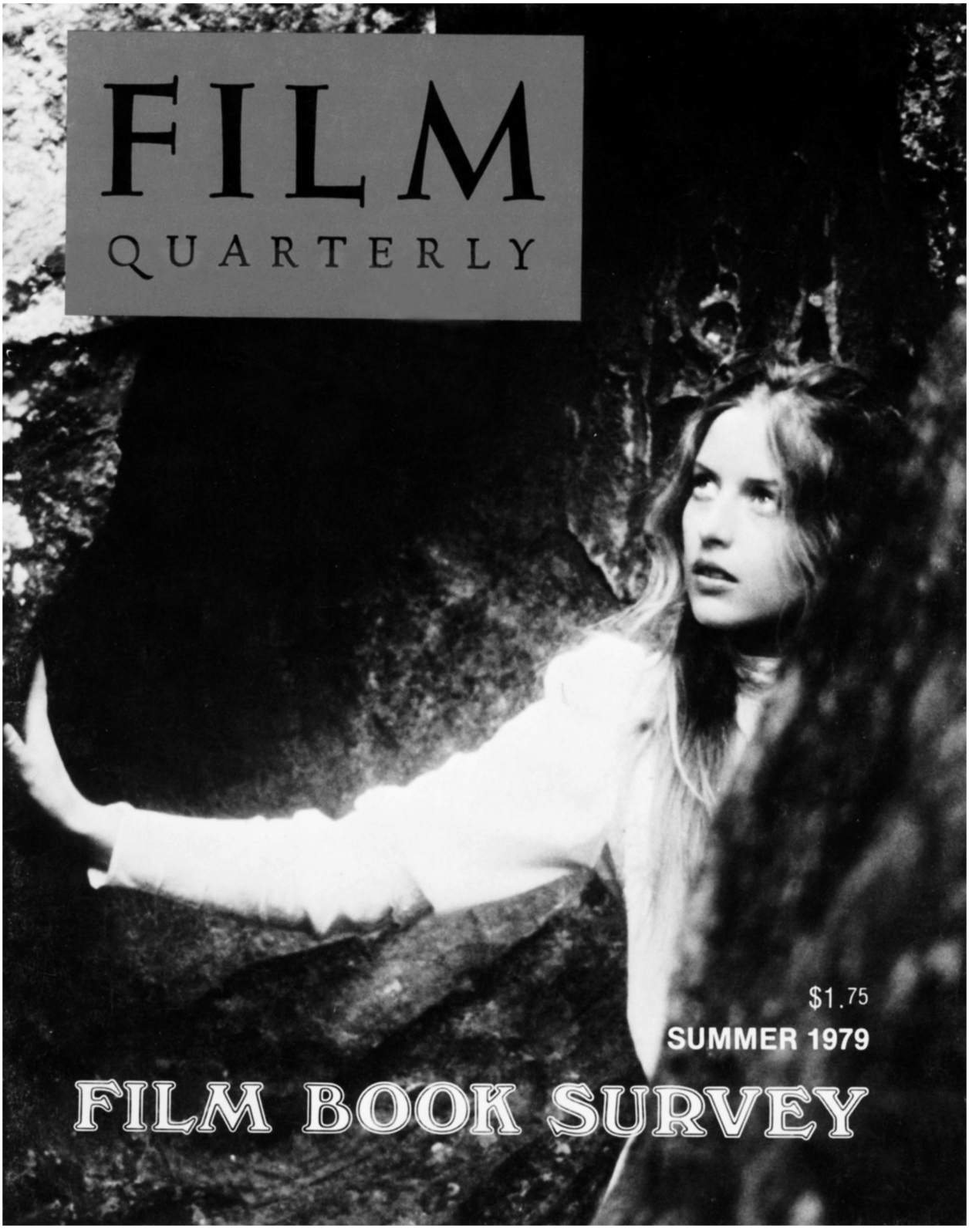
FILM
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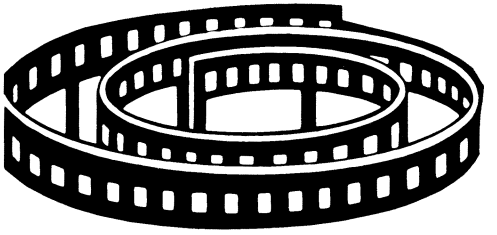
SUMMER 1979
FILM BOOK SURVEY

STORIES INTO FILM

edited by William Kittredge and Steven M. Krauzer



Here are nine good short stories that became good movies, collected to explore the relationship of film to literature as both competing and complementary media. Film fans and popular fiction lovers will recognize these stories and will discover to their delight the existence of some favorites in another medium. The stories run the gamut: horror, suspense, the Western, comedy, and science fiction are all represented. The inclusion of headnotes, cast lists, stills, and film sources make this book a valuable teaching tool. paperback CN638 $5.95

Orson Welles

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by ANDRE BAZIN
Foreword by Francois Truffaut
Profile by Jean Cocteau

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CONTRIBUTORS

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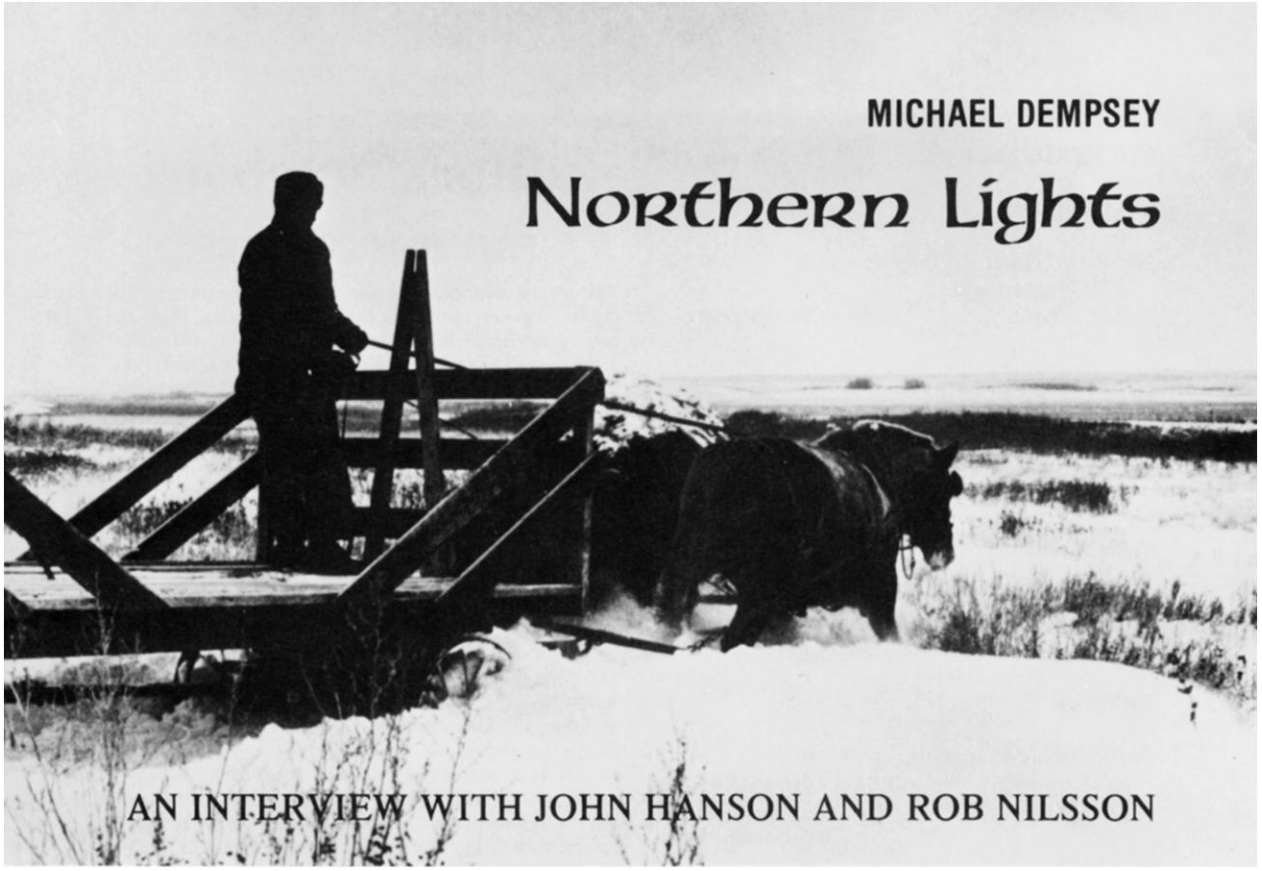

In the present parlance of major studios, "low budget" is likely to mean $3,000,000. But, away from them, shoestrings don't have Gucci labels. Film-makers still have to scrimp, beg, and write grant proposals as well as cast, shoot, and edit. Commonly, projects which should consume no more than a year end up taking several, and creative intensity is all too likely to fade away. *Northern Lights* has defeated all these threats. Produced for just $330,000 plus deferments by a small San Francisco company, Cine Manifest, the film controls a saga of grass roots politics, a love story, and a period setting with eloquent authority.

The period is the winter of 1915-16; the setting, the family farms of North Dakota under seige by a winter harsh even for the region. With crops failing everywhere, the usual economic and political burdens of the farmers—leeching costs extorted by middlemen and absentee Eastern tycoons for freight, grain elevators, interest, mortgages, and fixed prices—now become crushing; and banks begin foreclosing on farm after farm, wiping out livelihoods and lives. As a result, an agrarian reform movement with links to socialism, the Nonpartisan League, arises throughout the area. Organizers fan out, doggedly wearing down the native skepticism of the farmers and gradually welding them into a party which eventually took control of the state government for several years and eradicated oppressive practices. (See Robert L. Morlan's *Political Prairie Fire: The National Nonpartisan League 1915–1922,* University of Minnesota Press, 1955, for a full account.) At a Filmex discussion in March with an audience which had just seen *Northern Lights,* Rob Nilsson and John Hanson, who wrote, directed, and edited the film together, declared that they were out to reveal "the radical roots of a conservative state."

But *Northern Lights* addresses these matters on a more personal scale; its Marxism is refresh-

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ingly undoctrinaire. For a long time, the film's hero, a rawboned young farmer named Ray Sorensen (Robert Behling), rejects participation in the infant NPL; he is too concerned with day-to-day survival and too skeptical of promise-laden reformers who lack the firepower to go up against big business. Many of the black-and-white movie's scenes concentrate on the workaday drudgery and heartbreak of sweating for bare existence in the sere, frigid, yet eerily beautiful Dakota fields. One sequence, the gathering of a farm community to thresh a neighbor's wheat crop during a blizzard, has the poetic grandeur of comparable sequences in the more metaphysical *Days of Heaven.* A descendant of Gregg Toland's work on *The Grapes of Wrath,* Judy Irola's cinematography, blown up from 16 to 35mm, works resourceful wonders with high contrast tones, silhouettes, and an attractive graininess. The warm kinship of diverse families which this imagery memorializes is the side of mass movements which seldom finds its way into formal history.

Essentially, *Northern Lights* rests upon the conflict between politics and private life. Hanson and Nilsson consistently show that logic and debate, however cogent or irrefutable, are not enough to fire political conviction. Private quirks keep on sabotaging ideological purity. To win over one waggish old man, Ray must help him clear away a rockpile; a younger farmhand will back the NPL only if Ray can outwrestle him, and Ray can't. Even the film's political set piece, Ray and some farmers hashing out his economic analogy between coffee and farm produce, pays as much attention to the individual traits of the farmers—their faces, how they sit, their mixed English-Norwegian speech—as it does to the overt sociopolitical message. This is not just humanism. *Northern Lights* seeks to focus on radical convictions which spring not from study or reading but from direct, bedrock experience of oppression. The film-makers respect even the most cantankerous, idiosyncratic reasons for joining, or not joining, the NPL. The movie's salient visual qualities—its alternation between stark imagery for the private struggles of the characters and superimposed captions for the broad political context, between intimate close-ups and long-shot silhouettes—epitomize its feeling for human complexity amid a political matrix.

The film uses the story of Ray and his fiancée, Inga Olsness (Susan Lynch), to bear down upon these ambiguities. It takes personal tragedy born of political injustice—the death of his father, the loss of her family's farm—to pitch them into the NPL's campaign; and even these agonies are not enough to enlist Ray's brother, John (Joe Spano, like Behling and Lynch a professional actor in a cast of local amateurs). The funeral of Mr. Sorensen, with its horizon-line shots of mourners, will remind many of similar sequences in such Westerns as *Red River, The Searchers,* and *Shane;* and its meaning, too, is similar: suffering visualized simultaneously as both a personal and a historical reality. But their common pain inexorably drives Ray and Inga apart. He must spend long days on the road, while she is obliged to live in town apart from both him and her heritage. Even as the nascent NPL struggles for a footing, their flowering bond, so beautifully caught in the proposal scene amid winter trees which opens the movie, begins to wither. One of the movie's most powerful moments, a Resnais-like comment on the eroding powers of time and space, comes when Inga sorrowfully tells a friend that, regardless of her political agreement with Ray, she senses her feeling for him seeping away. More directly, she confronts him passionately when NPL business disrupts a longed-for reunion, crying out that "sometimes the little things have to come first." In one sense, this represents a traditional dichotomy: man taking part in action out in the world, woman nurturing emotions of the heart back home. In another, it expresses the film's central idea, that there are no "little things"; everything in life has significance, and for its own sake, not as part of a "political dimension." With their closely detailed performances, Behling and Lynch embody this perception, blending the dignity of historical woodcuts with the throb of flesh and blood.

As the directors indicated at their Filmex session, the radicalism of the NPL has not truly persisted in North Dakota. "The farmers could understand Karl Marx!" writes Henry R. Martinson (*North Dakota History,* Spring 1976), the 95-year-old socialist and former NPL organizer whose discovery of an old diary provides the framing device of *Northern Lights* (and whose

life is the subject of *Survivor,* the next Hanson-Nilsson film). *Northern Lights* does not explore this gradual shift to conservatism, though Martinson's long perspective and Inga's anguish over her loss of emotion suggest potential openings to such exploration. Even while acknowledging the rightward drift of the state's farmers during the decades since the NPL's heyday, Hanson and Nilsson seemed a bit uneasy over, say, the prospect of a *Blue Collar* about modern farmers. But that may be the work of another movie. The one they have made is an affecting piece of hand-crafted Americana, which so far they are being forced to distribute themselves.

Susan Lynch in NORTHERN LIGHTS

In writing, directing, and editing Northern Lights, *was there any precise division of labor between the two of you?*

HANSON: It evolved in various stages. We collaborated in giving direction to the film and discussing what directions to take from every level, from producing to raising the money to writing the script to planning out the shots to editing it and now distributing it. The main precise division came on the set, where we made it very clear that Rob was speaking with the actors, directing the actors and rehearsing with them, while I was serving as what could be called technical director, setting up the shots, working with the crew. And then, during a take, we would hover behind the camera whispering to each other about how the take was going or discuss with each other after the take was over whether we thought it was a good take or whether we needed to do more or what the problem was. We had two editing tables, one upstairs and one downstairs. We would discuss how a scene should be cut, one of us would cut it—we were always working simultaneously—and, when we'd finished a scene, we'd just come and say, "Okay, I've got a scene cut. Let's look at it." And sometimes we would trade scenes. So, in that sense, we were always in communication on the film.

Did this division of labor on the set come about because you had different backgrounds, like, say, one more technical and one more with actors?

NILSSON: I think it was really an organic kind of decision. We had been running acting workshops at Cine Manifest, trying to develop talent as we developed our scripts. And to give us the opportunity to work with actors, because none of us came in with a lot of dramatic experience, either in theater or in film . . . It really was a cross-fertilization at all times. For some reason, it was given to John and me to be able to collaborate. We have seen in our own collective and elsewhere other examples of an attempt to do this, and they really have been quite disastrous. And the experience for both John and me is both good and also something that we don't just want to be limited to. Both of us want to direct totally on our own, as well as maybe collaborate down the line somewhere again. But there's something very similar in our backgrounds. We both have Scandinavian backgrounds. We were both easel painters before we became film-makers. There's a certain similarity of temperaments, but also certain areas in which we're different and therefore can be catalytic to one another. I had done one more dramatic film before, so maybe I had one film more experience than John.

HANSON: I had worked a lot more as a freelance technician—commercials, everything. I've worked as an art director on features, doing lighting on different kinds of feature films, doing camerawork. And a lot of commercials that came into San Francisco. So my technical background was probably a little more solid. It was a rational decision. It wasn't a flip of the coin. There was no sense of "you direct the actors this week, and I'll do it next week."

How did you deal with the script together?

NILSSON: "Grew like Topsy" is my favorite expression about it. It evolved from being a thirty-minute documentary into being an hour-

an-a-half docu-drama combining documentary and fiction.

Do you remember exactly when all this started?

NILSSON: Autumn of '75 was when we went out there to begin our research, I think.

HANSON: I think our last shooting was August of '77.

NILSSON: The whole thing proceeded very much along Marxist lines, I would think, in terms of the economics of it being the guiding and molding force. Because as we were able to get more money, the film could grow and could become more ambitious and more fully realized. We always worked from written material. We never improvised. We never went in there and said, "What should we do today?" We never at any point had a bound script about which people could say, "This is the script." We had things as long as . . . I don't remember. Did we ever have even a fifty or a forty-page thing?

HANSON: No. I think the longest we had in sections was maybe twenty, twenty-five pages.

NILSSON: It was sort of like flying blind, scrambling by the seat of your pants to arrive at some kind of synthesized product of all this input, both documentary and our fictional ideas, and all the input from the people in Crosby (North Dakota) and around there. But on any given day when we went on the set, we had scripts. And everybody had had them for a couple of days, or at least the night before, so that the actors could study them. Then very often we would depart from the script on the basis of, say, some input from a local who could say something better than we could have imagined it or could put it in his own words and be much more effective. For instance, the coffee scene was elaborately written out; and everybody had a copy of it, as I recall. I know Behling did. Anyway, whether they had their copies or not, I had it all written out. We did it in blocks. "You're feeling really angry at the storekeeper. And after Harry talks about how Ted from Minot brings the coffee up once a week, then you're going to be talking about the storekeeper and how your own personal relationship with him isn't so good." That sort of thing. So everybody knew the order in which they were going to speak, the content of what they were going to say. But then they would basically put it into their own words. In the same way, we'd tell them, "You can speak in Norwegian, you take English," all that kind of stuff. So that it was plotted out kind of like a road map, and yet each little mile was not spelled out in terms of the exact syntax we'd use. I would always work that way regardless of whether I had a full script from beginning to end or not. But you can't have that kind of flexibility unless you know exactly what you want to do and have it all planned out. The same thing with shots. We had the whole thing completely planned out the night before, every angle, everything. So that, if we wanted to change, we'd be changing *from* something, not just improvising. We had to be very concise because we didn't have the time or the money to stick around.

HANSON: Some of those scenes we had to shoot in four hours.

NILSSON: Like the foreclosure scene. I mean, there were twenty-five, thirty pick-ups out on the road, farmers bringing in equipment and horses and old cars. Big flatbed trucks to bring in the old cars.

HANSON: That was our first shoot, in the winter of '75. We had a friend, Richard Kletter, as assistant director with a bullhorn, and that helped tremendously for us to move faster. On the threshing scene, he was also there. After that first shoot, we never had that again. We really had to scramble. We did the funeral scene, for instance, just once, the procession and the actual burial stuff and all that. I think maybe we had two takes on the song and one take on everything else. Because it was getting dark, for one thing.

NILSSON: We'd set up a camera position like a battery: "These are our cannons down here." And the cortege would go up the hill. We'd take a long shot as they went and then zoom in and take a closer shot. We could only do it once.

You used only one camera?

NILSSON: Only one camera. Two cameras in the blizzard. Boy, what a great decision that was!

How were you able to deal with material involving bad weather? For instance, the scene when Ray's father is out in the field drinking, and he sits against the old scarecrow against which he will be found dead. You had a couple of angles

on that, with the wind blowing just so to ripple the grass just so, with sky matching. To what extent did you have to wait for weather or help create it, push it along, or whatever?

HANSON: We could never wait for weather. We had to shoot. The only waiting we could do was, for instance, get up real early and try to get early morning light or sunrise, or low sun in the afternoon or something like that. In the scarecrow scene, the shots that were cut together—like his walk out of the barn, then there's another closer shot of that—those two were fifty miles from each other on totally different days. The wind always blows out on the prairie, so that wasn't a problem.

Could you always count on getting snow when you needed it?

HANSON: No. For instance, the second year we were out, which was right around the first part of April, just at the turn of winter to spring, we had temperatures from zero to ninety above. We had snow. We had beautiful hot summer days. We had rain, slush, mud. And, of course, it drove us crazy as far as continuity went. Like the funeral day. It snowed the night before. The day before that, it had been beautiful, like summer. And we wanted snow for the funeral. Never hoped to get it. The only reason we shot the day the blizzard came was because it was the last possible day we could shoot.

There were also story points: The snow has an effect on the wheat; it ruins part of the crop, and they have to race the blizzard to get it harvested in time; and then later the middleman uses that as an excuse not to buy the wheat. So you would have needed snow to get all that across.

HANSON: Yeah. We needed snow for that. And we hoped. We had talked: "Wouldn't it be something if we could film the threshing in a blizzard?" Never expecting to get it. And the blizzard came up in the middle of the day and hit us.

NILSSON: One of the expressions that I use in this is "living off the land," and that's an example. When that blizzard hit us, I became aware that this is probably the greatest opportunity that we would ever have that was just sort of God given. We didn't know it would be there. In fact, when we got there, the sun was out, and our thing was just to get the tractor and the clouds of smoke billowing out of it and the men working. All of a sudden, this storm hits us. And nobody wants to go home. The farmers, of course, had been through it all. So we just tried to get all the damn footage we could of it. It went on for I don't know how many hours, but we cranked all the film we had. Then, after that, we devised all the plot elements, the fact that they had to get the wheat in so that the crop would not be lost. That was not scripted until later. Because, as you'll recall, it was given in voiceover. A lot of the film was built that way, after we had expended the funds that we had to make a traditional narrative fictional film and we had no other way of having certain kinds of things happen. A story created itself. Living off the land. We used the money that we had, the resources that we had, and finally we used the ruses that we could figure out to put this together and have it be a single story. Not that it's a story we didn't know we wanted; but there are those options, exactly what plot points you'll emphasize. The whole notion of the farmers struggling against not only nature but against the political and economic forces of the time was, of course, key. And anything that could be done, living off the land, to make that happen, we found a way.

You must have had to stop shooting sometimes to raise more money.

NILSSON: We sure did. It seems like half the time that's what we were doing. And we would be editing in the meantime, getting together a cut, which we would then bring back to North Dakota and/or show to friends. And, evaluating the feedback and our own energies, we would then plunge back into the fray of getting more money.

Your credits indicate that you had money from so many different sources.

NILSSON: We had lots of individuals, but the mainstay was the North Dakota Committee for Humanities and Public Issues and Ev Albers, their executive director. John had originally made a film with him and with the North Dakota Committee for Humanities and the Wyoming and Montana committees on strip mining up there called *Western Coal.* And so he established a good relationship with them to start with. Ev Albers was tremendous. You may have noticed he got the credit "Godfather." He was the Godfather.

HANSON: Du Art lab in New York did a terrific blow-up. It's really great.

The grain in it seemed to suit the subject matter.

HANSON: We feel the same way, that the grain, the high contrasts, the rich blacks, the silhouettes, the way we had it timed and printed—all of that—really make the film work. And, of course, we couldn't have gotten it into theatrical distribution unless it were in thirty-five. But we didn't have the money to do a blow-up. Irwin Young at Du Art loved the film and said, "We've got to get this film out there. I'm going to do the blow-up." Irwin is responsible for the blow-ups on *Girl Friends, Northern Lights, Alambrista, Joe and Maxie, Harlan County U.S.A.* All of these films, shot in sixteen, couldn't conceivably reach the audience they're reaching without that blow-up. We have a commitment to pay him back every nickel of the blow-up cost, and I know we will. Thank God there are people like that around.

Women played many key roles in making the film. Was it a non-union production?

HANSON: Actually, everyone who worked on the film was a union member, of NABET, Local 532 in San Francisco. We acted as if we had a union contract, in the sense of the hours we worked. Everyone was paid the same, which was how it differed from a union-scale type of thing.

NILSSON: Including us.

HANSON: Everyone in the crew—actors, technicians, production assistants, assistant editors, whatever—we all made $50 a day when we were filming and editing. And then everyone gets another deferment on top of that. So everyone has a piece of the profits for the film. Judy Irola is a member of Cine Manifest. We in Cine Manifest felt there was just no question that she would shoot the film. Of course, then, five years ago, it was a thirty-minute film. We always saw the film in much smaller dimensions. We had hopes and dreams, but it wasn't "here's this script and here's this production and the package, and you gotta get big actors, big-name everything, to do it." It wouldn't have been done. And it is unusual; there aren't many women working in the industry, whether it's in photography or in sound. The sound recordist was Joan Musante. The production designer was Marianne Astrom-De Fina, and there aren't many women production designers for features. Susan Slanhoff was in charge of sound cutting. Many of the assistant editors, which is a traditional place where women get jobs, were, of course, women.

HANSON: San Francisco's unusual in that sense, because we have a small industry up there, and we all know each other. There is a talent pool of people who ordinarily couldn't work down here (Los Angeles), at least at the kind of level at which we can give each other work up there.

Anchoring this to the film's plot—would it have been totally inconceivable for that time for Inga to join Ray in organizing?

HANSON: It would have been pretty goddamn unusual. She would really have had a very hard time making it. There were women travelling around in that area—Kate Richards O'Hare, Emma Goldman, Mother Jones—who had more national profiles. And there were local women who, I think, were very intelligent and persuasive within their own arenas. But it would have been unrealistic. We purposely wanted to have a woman who was struggling with the constrictions on her. I'm much more interested in

CINE MANIFEST

In the early seventies, seven young people started Cine Manifest as a base for making socially progressive narrative films. The organization was initially highly collective: members worked at commercial jobs by turns, pooled their earnings, and shared both technical facilities and experience. Three or four feature scripts were developed, including *Over-Under, Sideways-Down, Quint's Last Case* (which has never been produced), and Rob Nilsson's *Jamming*, a story about a taxi-drivers' strike. Although the group has had its share of internal strife, it has thus facilitated a substantial body of work attempting to deal with American working-class life in a responsible yet dramatic way.

As we go to press, we learn that *Northern Lights* has received a Cannes Festival "Golden Camera Award" for best first feature film. In the fall it will be released theatrically in Europe and in American metropolitan areas; it will also be seen on TV in various European countries.

not simply making some heroic female model in the film. I'm much more interested in showing a real problem that a woman's having, which is that for the first time in her life she's struggling with her own identity. It's outside of family, it's outside of love. If things had gone along "well," she would have been married and pregnant by the time the movie is over, living on the farm and not having any sense of a choice. I think that, by the end of the film she's discovering that she has a choice. Women were equal in work. They worked on the farms. They rode the horses and did the chores as well as the baking and taking care of the kids. We didn't show much of that, but it actually did happen.

You had many inhabitants of the region working as actors, but how did you get in contact with professionals like the two leads? Are they part of Cine Manifest, too?

NILSSON: Yeah, they sure are. Joe and Bob were both in *Over-Under, Sideways-Down*, Cine Manifest's first feature, the one it did for "Visions" (on PBS). Susan came out of our acting workshop. As you know, Ingmar Bergman values working in this kind of family way, not only ensemble playing with the actors he's worked with so many times, and Sven Nykvist, but also on lower levels. He does value what the grip might have to say. They all read the script. And he undercuts that terrible Hollywood-ish kind of competitive ranking that goes on on every set I've ever seen. Part of it is the division between union and management.

It's also because labor unions specify what jobs this or that person can or cannot do, according to rules.

NILSSON: Yeah, those rules. I'm all for labor unions. They were necessary down here in Hollywood and are today still necessary. Big money here can't have a free rein because we've already seen what they'll do with it. But, yes, those rules undercut their own effectiveness. What they finally end up doing is preventing people from working. You get that whole double-bind: "you can't work unless you're in the union, and you can't get in the union unless you have a job." That's all crazy. So that's why it's nice to work with people from San Francisco that we know and to go into a place like North Dakota and spend the time to get to know the people. We lived in the farmhouses there with the folks. One of them, Ray Ness, played Henrik Sorensen; he was the major-domo of the area, pulling together these old guys. He suggested the rock-pile scene and a pig-slaughtering scene. Other scenes and aspects of scenes came from people up there. So that organic way of working is all-important.

Have you had the idea that you might want to be, in a sense, historians of the region?

NILSSON: Speaking for myself, no. I had family and ethnic roots in the area. I grew up in Northern Wisconsin. My grandfather, Frithjof Holmboe, was the first film-maker in North Dakota. So I was going back to origins in a certain sense, and that meant lot to me. I know it meant a lot to John, too. There was a reason for us to do it, rather than somebody else. But I'm writing a script now with running as a theme, male compulsiveness and sexual identity and trying to recapture youth or deal with the problems of growing older and failing faculties. It's based on experiences in my life in a number of different areas. I want to make more films about the Midwest, too, but that's not the only thing I want to do.

HANSON: The next movie I do has to come from within me, not from some idea of wanting to chronicle some movement or history or person or anything outside my experience.

Would these movies be overtly about economic and political issues, as Northern Lights *is?*

HANSON: What I want to continue to make is films which help us deal with our lives. Help us understand ourselves. Help us understand this confusing system around us. Films whose politics come out of the relationships of the characters and the situations that the characters are in, just as the films come out of the experiences and the relationships that I'm going through.

In this regard, is Inga's speech about the little things coming first sometimes your point-of-view also?

HANSON: It's very much mine. It's also been Rob's. It applies particularly to film directors because we give our lives to a film. Our personal lives often suffer, and have suffered during the course of this film. That tension between our work and our love life, our sexual life, our relationships with other men and women is always there.

NORTHERN LIGHTS: *Organizing the farmers*

Is the ending of the film meant to suggest that Ray and Inga will not be able to have a life together, or is it left open?

HANSON: I feel it's left open. She says, up on the hill there by the grave, "Where are you going to go next?" And he says, "I'll be in Crosby for the election." She says, "Well, I'll see you there then." And their last touch, which is their last contact in the film, is a touch of caring and loving and understanding. They both have understood more about that relationship, and I think you can look at it as open. It's not a closed door.

NILSSON: We want any kind of victory like that, the League victory, whatever, to have those realistic vectors that all victories have. Which is that they are both preceded by and followed by defeats, which then again lead to victories. I personally don't want to make a utopian statement because as soon as you envision utopia you envision the end of process. And I don't think that happens in nature or in man or in politics. I'm an optimist because I believe in people. And I believe that finally, as we get closer to the feeling of love and the feeling of gentle and also powerful human interaction, those forces beget the same in the world. But then we also have the Dark Ages that always seem to come back, and there's always a dialectic. And that's why I like Marxism. Because it does not say—at least I've never heard it say when it's been explained to me right—that all we've got to do is get to *there*, and then we've got it.

Doesn't Marxism promise an eventual utopia, too, whether it's called the dictatorship of the proletariat or the classless society?

NILSSON: Well, even a classless society, I think, would continue to evolve. Maybe towards more spiritual values. I don't know. But I know that, whatever it would be, it would never just sit still. Personally, I'm just interested in seeing that any film I make, whether it be about sexuality or about political movements or some other subject, exists within a political context. Because we all live in political envelopes as well as all the other kinds of envelopes we live in.

Could you envision a movie of yours going in a direction on its own in conflict with the points of view that you hold about life, the world, economics, politcs? Would you feel bound to force it back into conformity with those points of view? Or would you want to let it go the way it goes?

NILSSON: That's exactly the point, to me, of

real politics, as it is of real art or real experience. That you're always trying to push the limits. You're never trying to box things up. That's why I hate political parties that always know what's right and what the line can be and what history is at any given moment.

It does seem that a lot of Marxists are prone to that.

NILSSON: That's one of the big weaknesses of the Left, a terrible weakness, and one of the things that has turned people away from socialist, communist parties, particularly in our era, time and time again. The languages are outmoded, the ways of thinking are outmoded, we're all going back to the period of the Russian Revolution and trying to figure out in terms of their language and experience what we should do. And that's fine, to know history. You have to know it. But you have to evolve your own language, your own forms, for the time that you live in. I like the final definition of politics in *Webster's*, which is "the sum total of human relationships in a society." I don't intend to sound liberal in that respect, because I don't like liberality. I like taking stands. I like saying, "I believe in this, and I'll go with these guys, and those guys can take care of themselves." But, finally, you've got to be responsible to your vision. And if your vision takes you out beyond the accepted realms or definitions of your fellows, you've got to go there, you have to follow it.

Four Shots at **The Deer Hunter**

Few recent American films have stirred up such conflicting critical reactions as Michael Cimino's* Deer Hunter. *Its winning of five Academy Awards, though neither artistic strength nor political acumen are exactly prerequisites for an Oscar, helps to certify it as a cultural event, late-seventies style. And the film undeniably has a strong effect on audiences: people cry. Its importance will doubtless recede notably in a few months, but it deserves careful analysis even if it is, in a favorite term of Pauline Kael's, "a mess." In the commentaries that follow, Michael Dempsey presents a measured overview of the film, Marsha Kinder analyzes its political implications, David Axeen comments on some of its literary and filmic antecedents, and Ernest Callenbach speculates on its appeal through a structural-psychological analysis.

HELLBENT FOR MYSTERY

Vast, powerful, muddled, sketchy, moving, confused—*The Deer Hunter* can accommodate almost all the critical adjectives. Set in a mythical Pennsylvania steel town, Clairton, and in Vietnam, Michael Cimino's 183-minute attempt at an epic tries to encompass the effects of the war in Vietnam upon American society in three mammoth narrative blocks of Before, During, and After. In part one, we follow a trio of friends—Michael (Robert De Niro), Nick (Christopher Walken), and Steven (John Savage)—through their last free hours before entrance into the

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Army, during which they labor in the local mill, drink and shoot pool with their buddies, muse about the future, attend Steven's lavish Russian Orthodox wedding and reception, and drive up into the Alleghenies for a final, edgy hunting trip. The second segment reunites them in a Viet Cong stockade where brutal captors force them and other prisoners, both American and South Vietnamese, to play Russian roulette while the Con bet on which ones will blow their brains out. The climactic section combines these two worlds as Michael returns to Clairton in a state of stunned anomie, only to journey back into the maw of the war in search of the lost Nick. The vaulting, capacious ambition of this film embraces several subgenres of war movie, both recent and past. Like *The Boys in Company C* and *Big Wednesday*, it shows us ordinary home boys before enlistment. Like *Go Tell the Spartans*, it plunges them into the war's perfidy and disorienting ambiguities. Steven becomes a paraplegic, like Jon Voight's character in *Coming Home*. Michael and Nick, in different ways, lose their moral and emotional equilibrium during and after the war, like Harrison Ford's deadened vet in *Heroes* and the protagonists of *Who'll Stop the Rain*, Converse and Hicks. *The Deer Hunter* also descends from such triple-pal movies as *The Roaring Twenties*, *The Best Years of Our Lives*, and *Till the End of Time*, which deal with American survivors of the world wars home from the fray with stumps for arms, plates in their heads, readjustment problems, and illusions shredded even by victory in righteous combat. Probably no American movie has ever tried to embrace so much of war and its consequences all at once. The results polarize the adjectives.

The Deer Hunter takes no overt political position on America's role in the war. Michael, Steven, Nick and, it seems, the whole town of Clairton have no opinion on the subject, though there is a "Serving God and Country Proudly" banner hung across the reception hall.

But *The Deer Hunter* is not pro-Vietnam; its portrayal of the war's disasters and agonies is too ferociously, yet sorrowfully graphic for that. Cimino has shot immense tableaux of panic-stricken, retreating refugees thronging rural roads and fighting military convoys for every inch of walking space. These images try for Goya-esque, engulfing madness and, whatever the limitations of the film's humanistic approach to this war, they are worthy of the comparison. The last evacuation of Saigon, with abandoned mobs shrieking and rioting outside the US embassy, is a huge, appalling sequence which reduces American pretensions to a grotesque joke. Cimino plumbs stunning depths of terror in the Viet Cong prison hut. As the prisoners shriek and the bettors torment them sadistically, as bullets smash into heads and scatter gore, as other captives claw at the bars of underwater, rat-infested cages, he employs a shooting style which stresses fast, jagged editing and rapid, almost spastic camerawork, while at the same time prolonging the sequence almost unbearably, creating the sensation that the hideous, relentless fear will never end.

But this part of the movie also exemplifies something else: xenophobia. Except for the refugees and the abondoned in Saigon, virtually all the Vietnamese in the film are mindlessly evil. The Viet Cong torturers are as animalistic as the perfidious Japs in so many World War II movies. Later, corrupt South Vietnamese match their revolting brutality in a gambling hell where they, too, bet on whether or not Russian roulette players will kill themselves; only now these players, one of them a psychologically destroyed Nick, are heroin-addicted "champions" whom the gamblers field like prize fighting cocks. For many, xenophobia has seemed like too mild a term. David Talbot, for instance, co-author of *Creative Differences*, a book on leftwing politics in Hollywood, says "On the one hand, you have a *Coming Home*, which has a clear-cut, antiwar, progressive point of view. On the other hand, you have a film like *Deer Hunter*, which I think is a reprehensible film. Its depiction of the Vietnamese is just unforgivably racist."

But neither life nor movies are quite this tidy. Part of art's function is the subversion of even "clear-cut, antiwar, progressive" attitudes. The film's real shortcoming is not racism (see *Midnight Express* for that) so much as imaginative narrowness and underwriting. Although Cimino has created a shocking panorama of the degradation which the war visited upon all it touched,

he completely fails to show any common ground of suffering between the Americans and the Vietnamese. His humanism, a tougher brand than what *Coming Home* purveys, lacks scope and true depth—maybe in part because he wants the war in Vietnam to symbolize War in General. As he has said, "It could just as easily have been the Civil War, or any war." This desire for universality probably accounts for the film's lack of interest in analyzing why we were in Vietnam; but it makes the Vietnamese abstractions, Treacherous Foe and Oppressed Mass. Because the pain of the three Americans is, by comparison, highly detailed and specific, a queasily plaintive note of something very like self-pity sounds, faintly, but distinctly, in the second and third parts of *The Deer Hunter.* As a result, the movie's vision shrinks precisely when it needs to expand.

What makes this failure especially strange is the "foreignness" of the Russianized Clairton, which the movie depicts in an awestruck light as a spiritual homeland rather than a dingy company town like the one in *Slap Shot,* which it resembles. Just as he treats war both realistically and abstractly, Cimino applies both documentary naturalism and lofty symbolism to Clairton. On the one hand, his camera prowls the cacophonous steel mill, the sooty streets, the grungy bar, the dilapidated house shared by Nick and Michael. On the other, he exalts Clairton into a kind of Valhalla for the Common Man. Vilmos Zsigmond's penumbral widescreen photography, with its slow tracks, pans and tilts, its long, patient takes, and its stark twilit backlighting, cloaks the town in an aura of dark majesty. Rather than take cheap shots at the insular, complacent populace, the film highlights the ceremonies which nurture them, especially the ornate wedding liturgy and the exuberant celebration of the reception. Besides this, Cimino makes virtually every moment of the men's day—from the descent of their street clothes off locker room hangers to the way they kick open the trunk of Michael's old Cadillac—an implicit rite. The film's measured, almost incantatory style makes almost every event and detail in it a monumental icon: Work, Camaraderie, Marriage. Even at its most swollen, this church-organ tone unifies the film and gives it passages of genuine grandeur. But perhaps it is also another reason why Cimino can't connect with the Vietnamese: the only ritual he gives *them* is Russian roulette.

Within this archetype is another, the male group, that fixture of so many recent American movies. The premise of *The Deer Hunter* is uncomfortably reminiscent of the maudlin *Big Wednesday,* which also features three buddies separated by marriage and Vietnam. Though he does seem to buy the notion that male friendship is the richest kind of relationship, Cimino evades the mush of the buddy-buddy genre. There is real imagination and attentiveness in the ways that he and the actors evoke the spirits of the men by meticulous study of their faces, voices, postures, and behavior. The first hour of the movie is nearly all ambiance, including most of the dialogue.

Much of what is most original about the movie springs from this intuitive, exploratory technique, but finally it is insufficient. No matter how painstakingly detailed, its episodes of boozing and backslapping are not so different from a thousand others; in film, archetypes have a way of turning into chestnuts. Cimino cannot develop the tensions among his characters; he can only indicate their existence. Except for his use of Russian roulette as a structural device, whenever he tries to set up dramatic complications, they come across as clumsy feints: the arrival of the Green Beret, wine droplets portentously staining the bride's lace, the attentions of Michael and Nick to Linda, the bride's pregnancy by another man. Despite the movie's length, none of them really pays off dramatically. The wedding and the reception, though beautiful as spectacles, meander rudderlessly along, as we sense that Cimino cannot find in their profusion the definitive images that he needs to make them register with full force.

The weak dramatic thrust of part one particularly cripples Michael, the title character, who is supposed to be the film's enigmatic soul. Cimino strains to make him a man of mystery, what used to be called the strong, silent type. Here, we seem intended to think, is a lordly hero whose calm, inviolate silence conceals ineffable depths. In early sequences, Robert De Niro plays him skillfully in the contemplative vein of his Monroe Stahr in *The Last Tycoon.* But the writing is so thin, indeed virtually non-

THE DEER HUNTER

existent, that he cannot illuminate the character. When Michael climbs a mountain to hunt, it's a Holy Mountain, a mystical aerie straight out of Leni Riefenstahl's *The Blue Light.* Russian choral singing underscores his unhurried pursuit of a kingly stag, which he fells according to his code, with one clean shot. But besides killing an ARVN soldier for wantonly murdering a peasant family, what else has he done in battle? Has he taken his foes, like his deer, in one clean shot? Hellbent for mystery, Cimino makes him a cipher.

Not until the torture sequence does Michael come alive, just in time to give the movie narrative drive. Snarling defiantly at the Viet Cong, goading his friends to risk Russian roulette, putting the gun to his own temple and pulling the trigger, he boldly takes the enemy off guard, kills them, and lead the others to safety past incredible obstacles. Now De Niro erupts with the volcanic force that has marked several of his movie parts; but this time the ferocious power bursts from a sane, resourceful man in full, steely command of his strength and skills. It may be the most profound study of raw courage ever put on film. Yet the cataclysm proves to be too extreme for even the most extraordinary individual heroism. When Michael tries to pull Nick back from the degradation of the gambling hell, his pleas and his willingness to risk his life again with Russian roulette are overwhelmingly stirring. But Nick, sketchily written but eerily acted by Christopher Walken, is a burnt-out case. When he suicidally fires into his skull, the annihilation of not only his life but Michael's hope, too, makes the film a genuine tragedy.

—MICHAEL DEMPSEY

POLITICAL GAME

The Deer Hunter has been hailed as "the greatest antiwar movie since *The Grand Illusion*" (Stephen Farber in *New West,* 18 Dec. 1978) and as "a film of great courage and overwhelming emotional power" that places its director Cimino "right at the center of our film culture" (Jack Kroll in *Newsweek,* 11 Dec. 1978). Undeniably, Michael Cimino's direction of many sequences is extremely skillful, and the acting performances are masterful. Yet the film is very dangerous because it sentimentally reaffirms American patriotism and heroism by seriously distorting

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history. The fact that it is receiving such critical acclaim (winning both the New York Critics Award and the Oscar for the best picture of the year) makes it even more dangerous. Rather than launching a new standard of American film-making as Farber claims, I fear that *The Deer Hunter*, like *Midnight Express*, heralds a new wave of reactionary jingoism. This fear is shared by many others—particularly the Vietnam vets who picketed the film at the Academy Awards.

Admirers of the film claim by some torturous logic that, despite the Vietnam sequences that lie at its center, *The Deer Hunter* is in no way political. Some suggest the battle scenes could have been from any war, but the fact is Cimino chose Vietnam and a realistic mode of presentation. Of course we must grant him his subject, but he is morally responsible to deal with the issues inherent in that material. Kroll praises *The Deer Hunter* as "the first film to look at Vietnam not politically, but as the manifestation of an endemic murderousness." Endemic" to whom, one wonders? The murderousness is shown to reside *only* in the Viet Cong, and we are supposed to believe this "artistic" choice has no political implications. Farber's reasoning is even more incredible.

In the Vietnam sequences of *The Deer Hunter*, Cimino never tries to justify American involvement; he simply observes the human consequences from the point of view of the American soldier. Art is always apolitical; the one and only enemy of art is cant. Cimino's refusal to be constrained by the leftwing interpretation of the Vietnam war may be what allows him to render the full, devastating impact of the experience. He isn't making the movie for Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden; his only loyalty is to the truth.

Unfortunately Jane Fonda and Tom Hayden are not the only ones who have heard about the My Lai Massacre. To live in America through the sixties *without being aware* of the opposition to the war or of the charges of war crimes against the American and South Vietnamese military forces was virtually impossible—even in a small steel town like Clairton, Pennsylvania, yet the characters in the film have no such awareness. Do these omissions imply that the incidents are insignificant? That they never really happened? Or that DeNiro and his friends simply didn't know about them and were a lot better off as a consequence?

No film dealing with war, or really with any form of human interaction, can possibly escape political implications. It's ironic that *The Deer Hunter* should be compared with the work of Renoir; for in *The Grand Illusion* and *The Rules of the Game* he explores complex situations with all of their contradictions—and despite his full knowledge of corruption, pain, betrayal, and the best intentions, without self-righteous judgments or a detached cynicism, Renoir still affirms human life. It is precisely this comprehensive moral perspective that defines Renoir's humanistic politics and that is missing in Cimino. *The Deer Hunter* purposely narrows the truth not only about the war, but also about the human relationships it depicts.

The Deer Hunter does not glorify war. No, it confirms that war is hell for anyone exposed to the experience. The distortion comes in the way the film defines the particular nature of that hell. It suggests the reason the war is so grim is that it draws Americans away from their wholesome small-town life—away from the camaraderie of romantic buddyhood, away from the majestic mountains and peaceful woods, away from the communal rituals of festive weddings, exhilarating hunts, and somber funerals. It draws them to treacherous jungles where they are subjected to inhuman atrocities committed by an alien race. There they become pawns in a game of Russian roulette where Viet Cong soldiers and foreign profiteers callously gamble with their lives. In the opening war footage, DeNiro, as a heroic green beret ranger, takes revenge against a Vietnamese who massacres innocent villagers, purging him from the earth with a flame thrower. Except for this and similar acts of valiant retaliation by DeNiro, *all* of the atrocities are committed by the Viet Cong. Of course, the film does acknowledge that the Vietnamese people are the ones who suffer the most, but neither the main characters nor the film-makers are primarily concerned with their misery. Rather, it is used as "production value" in the war scenes to make them look more authentic. What the film is concerned about is the fate of the three young buddies from a small Pennsylvania steel town.

Back home, Steven (John Savage) is clearly the weakest of the three buddies. Although he manages to rebel against an over-protective, dominat-

ing mother (Shirley Stoler), he is drawn into a Russian Orthodox wedding by his pregnant girl friend (Rutanya Alda) despite his claims that *he* has never slept with her. When his buddies go hunting, he's left behind with his bride.

Michael (Robert DeNiro) is the strongest. Though he is admired for his bold recklessness and wild unpredictability, he is somewhat of an outsider in the group. We are not really sure whether he shares the Russian heritage with his friends. At Steven's wedding, he is the only one without a girl. We soon discover he is attracted to Linda (Meryl Streep), but we wonder whether it's because she is involved with Nick (Christopher Walken), the one buddy Michael really loves. We never find out. After the wedding, Michael tears off his clothes and runs through the cold city night, as if he is seized with a restless urge to start the great adventure. Although Nick follows, he is more attuned to the context than the impulse; he lovingly drapes his jacket over Michael's genitals, as if acknowledging the cold or perhaps the nudity makes him nervous.

Though he is as sensitive and full of vitality as Michael, Nick lacks his intense focus and his ability to turn a willful impulse directly into action. He mediates between Michael and Steven. At the wedding, Nick is the best man rather than the groom. The festive atmosphere leads him to propose to Linda, but we're not sure whether he actually means it, and neither is she. Whenever Nick is moving to music or relaxing with the boys, it's hard to watch anyone else on screen (even DeNiro), but there is an odd vagueness at the center of his personality, as if he is more absorbed in self reflection than in action. On the hunt, Nick takes more pleasure from the beauty of the trees and mountains than from the shooting. Yet he is the only companion trusted by Michael, who thinks the other guys are all "assholes." In turn, they question Michael's virility (one even accuses him of being a "faggot") and fail to understand his "pure" style of hunting (why he insists on taking only one shot). Apparently, they haven't read Hemingway and don't know this particular masculine code. Yet the writers—screenwriter Deric Washburn, who was aided on the story by Michael Cimino, Louis Garfinkle, and Quinn Redeker—probably have read, not only Papa, but the whole tradition of American masculine literature that links hunting with war—e.g., Cooper's *Deerslayer*, Melville's *Moby Dick*, Faulkner's *The Bear*, and Mailer's *Why Are We in Vietnam? The Deer Hunter* has several superficial similarities with Mailer's mock epic novel—the hunt on the eve of war, the two loving-buddies who make it with the same woman as a means of avoiding their homosexuality, the contrast between the couple of romantic hunters and the other "assholes," the exploration of the connection between American masculinity and our involvement in Vietnam. Yet, *The Deer Hunter* strips them (Cimino would probably prefer the word *purifies*) of all irony, so that the film is "straight as an arrow" in every sense of the term.

As soon as the scene shifts to Vietnam, the three buddies are immediately thrust into a desperate situation. Taken prisoner by the Viet Cong, they are forced to play Russian roulette as their captors gamble on who will shoot their brains out. There's a terrible contradiction here. While the game of roulette is dramatically effective in forcing the audience to experience the agony of waiting for the gun to go off, it also implies, as the central war metaphor, that the outcome is all a matter of chance. Yet the narrative shows us exactly the opposite. The Clairton sequences—particularly the wedding and the hunt—accurately predict how each of the three men will respond in this crisis. Steven, the weakling, is overwhelmed with raw terror and becomes totally dependent on Michael, whose manic recklessness now proves heroic. Nick mediates between the two—agreeing to play the game of roulette according to Michael's strategy but refusing to leave Steven behind. While the three buddies are being rescued by an army helicopter, Steven lets go and Michael dives into the river to save him. Only Nick is carried back to safety; yet he loses the moral support of his loving friend Michael, which he needs as badly as Steven. The buddy relationship that at times seemed superficial back home, proves to be essential to survival on the battlefields of Nam.

Once out of the combat zone, the character differences in the three buddies are even more decisive in determining their fates. The cowardly Steve loses his limbs and hides out in a veterans' hospital so that his family and friends won't

see his deformity. The sensitive Nick has a mental breakdown, goes AWOL, and becomes addicted to heroin and Russian roulette. Only the heroic Michael returns from Nam completely intact, his uniform decorated with medals and his character improved by the war. He becomes a more responsible person who not only persuades Steven to come home from the veterans' hospital but also valiantly tries to save Nick from decadence, even risking a return to Vietnam and another round at Russian roulette. At home, Michael feels an even greater alienation from those who haven't experienced the war, but he ceases to be reckless because he knows what real courage is in life-and-death situations. When alone on the mountain, he decides not to shoot the deer. He's had enough killing. Michael's development from manic recklessness to a rich savoring of experience is a direct reversal of Nick's movement from a joyful passion for life to a zombie-like indifference to death. It is Michael's growing respect for life that helps him to replace Nick in the relationship with Linda. His behavior in bed is as pure as on the hunt. Not wanting to waste himself on sluts, he has saved his one shot for a natural doe-eyed beauty. He answers the earlier charges of homosexuality, not with empty words, but with manly action. Yet since the love scenes are so ambiguous, we may suspect that Linda is less satisfied than the deer.

By reaffirming Michael as a strong, silent man of action who succeeds in surviving a hellish war, the film implies that the war depends primarily on individual acts of will. It suggests that Michael is superior, not only to his buddies, but also to the thousands of others who died, were maimed, or were psychically damaged. It allows Michael to be proud of his uniform and medals without having to take into account the broader issues of the US role in the war and the atrocities committed by our side. Within the film's own structure, the place to bring in this larger perspective would have been in the character of Nick. If his mental breakdown had been linked with this broader understanding of the political context instead of blamed on a character flaw, then the ending would have had a totally different meaning. This omission weakens the film—both dramatically in understanding Nick's deterioration and thematically in handling the Vietnam war.

At the beginning of the film, Michael and Nick were both presented as potential heroes—the bold and the sensitive. In killing off Nick, Cimino seems to be purging the American male of his self-destructiveness and doubts—doubts that have arisen partly as a result of the decline of America as a world power and partly in response to the sexual assault from the Women's Movement and Gay Liberation. Nick's death frees Michael to succeed sexually with Linda and achieve a heroism without irony. The kind of heroism we expect from a John Wayne, not from a Robert DeNiro who has formerly played the neurotic anti-hero. Many American males apparently welcome this revival, for its heralds a resurgence of pride in their manhood just in the nick of time.

The film ends with all of Nick's friends assembled for his funeral, the final tragic ritual that balances the comic wedding ritual in the first half of the film. It's a grim occasion, similar to the scene following the hunt on the eve of the buddies' departure for Vietnam. The men had gathered in Welsh's bar, the local hangout, drinking beer and acting rowdy as usual. Then John (George Dzundza) went to the piano and played some Chopin that powerfully expressed what all of them were feeling. This was effective because the shallow stereotyped buddy relationship, with all of its competitive bickering and noisy posturing, suddenly was revealed to have other dimensions of sincere feeling and sensitivity. The music succeeded in communicating what would have been too corny to express in words; and in embodying the refined culture that is destroyed by the deafening explosions of the war scenes that immediately follow. In the funeral sequence, the film-makers use the same strategy, but this time it does not work. The mourners are looking for a similar ritual, which will enable them to accept Nick's death. They are sitting around a table, about to share a meal. John goes to start the scrambled eggs and begins, almost unconsciously, to hum "God Bless America." The others join in, at first softly, and then together they sing the song, reaffirming their love for Nick and their own sense of community. But how can this be reassuring when this affirmation rises out of ignorance? On a dramatic level, the mourners have

no more idea than we do of why Nick died; and on an historical level, they have very limited knowledge of the war in Vietnam. Like the deer hunt and the game of Russian roulette, the dirge is merely an empty ritual that is hollow and deadly. —MARSHA KINDER

EASTERN WESTERN

Although the recent flurry of Vietnam movies, with Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* still promised, might suggest the possibility of a new genre, "the Eastern," that is not Michael Cimino's goal. Instead of trying to transcend the Western, *The Deer Hunter* accepts its chivalric values (male bonding, honor, martial skill) and its defense of the imperial progress being forced on "native" or "savage" cultures. Cimino does enlarge the Western's locale, and his film *is* powerful and effective, but it is also fatally oversimplified. His difficulties proceed from the particularly naive version of Western conventions he tries to revive.

Beside its Oscar, *The Deer Hunter* has also raised a political furor. Peter Arnett, who won a Pulitzer Prize for his Vietnam correspondence, has complained that Cimino has invented an epic of innocence, in which white middle-class Americans are brutalized by Vietnamese torturers. In fact, the Americans portrayed are very pointedly ethnic working-class figures and Cimino, who still claims he was making an antiwar statement, seems to locate the brutality of the war in its absurdity. Most of the Vietnamese we see are in bewildered retreat; their actions are intended to seem as pointless as the Russian roulette game the Americans are forced to play.

The Russian-American steel town readying its boys for war has most of the virtues sentimentally attributed to organic, premodern communities. Its citizens are united by ethnic roots, orthodox religion, and unaffected love for each other. The stereotype is a familiar one, and is generally offered without condescension. Except that it is consistent with Western convention, less can be said for Cimino's portrayal of Vietnamese culture only as it would have appeared to his three American heroes. And, no matter how chillingly the Russian roulette motif reminds us that for individuals war has long been an absurd gamble with fortune, it is still silly to blame the war for violating the heroes' innocence. They had been had long before that.

James Fenimore Cooper's Natty Bumppo (a.k.a. Leatherstocking and Hawkeye, played long ago by Gary Cooper) is like Mike (Cimino's deer-hunter, played by Robert DeNiro) a deerslayer who became a manslayer. Natty would have preferred to confine his rifle virtuosity to the aesthetic pursuit of deer, but he is trapped in the clash between white and red cultures, and finally must kill to protect himself. With something like Mike's passion for the one-shot kill, Natty insists that he is "a slayer, but no slaughterer." Both men are chaste despite temptations, and both willingly risk everything to rescue their sworn companions from the fiendish tortures of natives resisting white invasion. Both are also limited by their class status. Cooper allows Natty to criticize the social order being installed in the frontier, but denies him the love of women above his station. Mike, less reflective than Natty, wins love, but is deprived of the more modern perquisite of middle-class status, a student deferment.

The problem with the Cooper-Cimino Western is that it asks us to suspend our knowledge of history, and ignore the realities of social structure. All those cattle drives to Abilene fed workers being crowded into newly industrializing cities. Canned meat also sustained the soldiers already being sent to new frontiers in the Caribbean and the Pacific. And, just as white men taught Indians to take scalps, US troops taught Filipinos to adminster water torture. That the Rough Riders became the most visible heroes of the invasion of Cuba only underlines the irony of the Western. These cowboy soldiers had Ivy League polo players for officers and their colonel, Teddy Roosevelt, an indisputable aristocrat, welcomed his troops' frontier experience "in the battle between savagery and civilization," but spent most of his time trying to improve their discipline. Neither Cooper nor Cimino wants to consider the people and forces really in control. They want us to identify with their heroes as natural aristocrats in still unspoiled wilderness domains.

The Western is not, of course, necessarily naive. Since Cimino does toy with some of the

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The Western is not, of course, necessarily naive. Since Cimino does toy with some of the

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ambivalence of male hunting rituals, he could have followed William Faulkner's Ike McCaslin for a conservative, Southern version of the genre, or Norman Mailer's D.J. for a more radical, technologically sophisticated one. Faulkner's "The Bear" and Mailer's *Why Are We In Vietnam?* have more complex structures and purposes; without any sacrifice of epic power or any shrinking from consequences, their heroes are placed against a background of the social and economic forces which are their undoing. When Ike and D.J. perform their acts of renunciation and refuse to shoot their bears, the moral significance of their forbearance is as complicated as the forests in which they hunt. When Cimino sends his Pennsylvania steelworker out to hunt, he transports him to sublime mountain peaks which are emphatically not in Pennsylvania, and accompanies the action with an embarrassingly lush and obvious score. When Mike pulls his shot at the conclusion of *The Deer Hunter*, the effect is as maudlin and pretentious as the contrived enchantment of the setting. It is reminiscent of Natty Bumppo, pausing in the sanctified calm of nature to regret that he had succumbed to the temptation of sport and shot an eagle.

Given Cimino's preference for this simple, individualistic Western, it is logical that he would view modern war as a game of Russian roulette. This metaphor states an important truth. Since war has been industrialized, it has ceased to be a test of individual strength and character. Heroism has become a matter of survival against mathematical odds, the "kill-ratios" calculated by bureaucratic macho in air-conditioned, fallout-proof war game rooms. But the metaphor is still a very limiting one, and particularly since Cimino seems satisfied to linger with its absurdity, that one chamber in six with live ammunition, that ironic mockery of the chivalric field of honor, where victory is just survival and, except for the charmed Mike, survival is mere chance.

It isn't just Rough Riders and Deadeye Dicks who find this horrifying, but it is still true that wars today are much more than matters of individual heroism or suffering. To win a modern war is to be able to mobilize an entire population for anonymous sacrifices, and sacrifices which will fall most heavily on powerless conscripts and civilians. The point is that the Vietnamese won their war. Even Henry Kissinger finally had to admit that our clients in the South failed because they could not mobilize local support. The conservatives who finally extricated us from Vietnam and ended the draft were beginning to fear their own local population and its resistance to mobilization. Cimino's film frightens some liberals and heartens some conservatives because it suggests resources of patriotism out there which survived Vietnam.

Cimino may not have intended that, any more than he intended to echo General Curtis LeMay's dismissal of the Asian regard for human life. But his naive choice of Cooper over Faulkner or Mailer leaves him open to such charges. Cimino's film is racist, but it is racist in the thoughtless sense the mass consumption Western always was. It is also at least as touching, as infuriating, and as important for national self-knowledge as Cooper's innocent American saga was.

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PHALLIC NIGHTMARES

The Deer Hunter is, for most viewers, a powerful experience, and I take it that one task of criticism is to explain a film's strength, even in cases when (as here) the film in question is in many ways confused, politically mindless, or worse. A racist or reactionary film may be redeemed from the trashbins of film history if it has enough artistic force and enough human significance in other areas than the political. Will this conceivably be the case with Cimino's film, as it was, for example, with Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*?

It is not altogether outrageous to mention Cimino alongside Griffith; they share an artificial folk sentimentality and an unabashed resort to melodrama, not to mention an unquestioning ethnocentricity, which appeal to large audiences, and they both have great graphic flair. But we cannot really go terribly far with this comparison.

Moreover, *The Deer Hunter* seems so haphazardly thrown together from a plot standpoint that we might well credit the stories that it contains elements from several other intended projects, not too well patched together. Yet this is too easy an out. It is true that ordinary dramatic probability is given short shrift in the film. Wild

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PHALLIC NIGHTMARES

The Deer Hunter is, for most viewers, a powerful experience, and I take it that one task of criticism is to explain a film's strength, even in cases when (as here) the film in question is in many ways confused, politically mindless, or worse. A racist or reactionary film may be redeemed from the trashbins of film history if it has enough artistic force and enough human significance in other areas than the political. Will this conceivably be the case with Cimino's film, as it was, for example, with Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*?

It is not altogether outrageous to mention Cimino alongside Griffith; they share an artificial folk sentimentality and an unabashed resort to melodrama, not to mention an unquestioning ethnocentricity, which appeal to large audiences, and they both have great graphic flair. But we cannot really go terribly far with this comparison.

Moreover, *The Deer Hunter* seems so haphazardly thrown together from a plot standpoint that we might well credit the stories that it contains elements from several other intended projects, not too well patched together. Yet this is too easy an out. It is true that ordinary dramatic probability is given short shrift in the film. Wild

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coincidence is relied on to get the three buddies together in Vietnam, and to bring Michael and Nick at the same moment into the same Saigon gambling den. The buddies appear about ten years too old to get into Airborne; to judge by Angela's child, they must have spent about three years in Vietnam. The realities of Vietnamese society and the political side of the war are simply "disappeared." But, perhaps to compensate, a majestic Orthodox cathedral is magically transported to a tiny Pennsylvania steel town, and Alpine peaks sprout among the peaceful, rounded Alleghenies.

Nonetheless, the thing *does* hold together; audiences sit through it. We must attempt to understand why.

One necessary step is to note that the scenes of refugees and evacuation are powerful and affecting, but are very peripheral to the dramatic structure of the film. The only scene in which Cimino deals with an actual act of war is the flame-thrower episode, and this functions mainly to solidify his point about the Vietnamese being bestial brutes. The war itself does not really interest Cimino, probably because it is a phenomenon of *organized*, not personal, violence. What interests Cimino is men and guns. The war is window-dressing; and indeed it could (and *should*) have been some other war. For the real project of the film is to examine male friendship under pressure.

The pressure comes from two directions. One, the fact that both Mike and Nick love the same woman, Linda, would in the forties or fifties have usually been handled in a comic mode; here, it becomes paralyzing and ultimately even gruesome. The second pressure, the war, is transmuted into the very peculiar metaphor of Russian roulette. It is hard to explain why *Deer Hunter* steers so clear of combat; the unpredictable bloody violence endemic to guerrilla war might seem ideal as a heroic test for Cimino's characters. Why did he not use it? My hunch is that he feared the intrusion of the realities of combat into the film would have jeopardized the emotional "purity" of his theme—just as showing the realities of Michael stalking, killing, and dressing a deer would have undermined his high-flown imagery. To show fighting might have reminded viewers that this was a war that turned men against officers, Vietnamese against each other, and Americans against the Vietnamese they were supposedly saving—in a word, it might have recalled the fact that Vietnam was on every level an intensely political war.

Cimino could not afford this, because he was making a film about men's friendships. This is a worthy and important project, in principle.* Deep friendships among men are rare, and are probably diminishing further in our alienated and competitive society, despite some "men's groups" and other conscious efforts to promote them. Cimino had a sound, if evasive, instinct in situating his tale of male camaraderie in the "exotic" setting of the working class, and in a non-metropolitan, "backward" (and highly mythical) part of the country; for middle-class urban life seems destructive to committed friendships of all kinds, but perhaps particularly to those among men—which are more vulnerable than those of women to the effects of economic and sexual competition and to the fear of homosexuality. Our natural need for friendship is desperately thwarted today, and this, I think, accounts for much of the "nostalgic" appeal of *The Deer Hunter*.

But the film, like its characters, carries inarticulacy to the point of mystification; it's on the level of Michael's "This is *this*!" about the bullet, or his "Okay" to the second deer. The feelings involved in the friendships that are under pressure *have* to remain ineffable, because if they were made explicit modern urban audiences would not be able to take them seriously. There *is*, on the one hand, a conflict between friendship and romantic love: if either Nick or Mike allowed themselves a truly serious attachment to Linda, it *would* endanger their friendship. Nick perhaps senses this when he pushes her off onto Mike at the reception; it may also underlie his mysterious decision not to phone her or return. And Mike, who has promised not to leave Nick behind, cannot really accept Linda's invitation to sleep together until he has made the utmost attempt to salvage the friendship bond

*I have spent much of my spare time this past year in writing, with Christine Leefeldt, an interview-based book called *The Art of Friendship*, to be published by Pantheon in October, in which a special chapter is devoted to the potentialities and problems of men's friendships.

by returning to Saigon and trying to bring Nick back.

And on the other hand there are psychic perils within the friendship itself. To get at how these function symbolically in the film, we must recall the utter improbability of the Russian roulette scenes, and attempt to explain how they got into the film.

The basic emotional logic of the plot requires the testing of the men's friendship through various perils. Sexual love for a woman is, as we have seen, treated as a real but relatively minor peril in itself. The major test of the men's devotion is supposed to be the war. Of course threats to the men's friendship could have arisen from a vast number of sources, ranging from natural or man-made disasters (forest fires, earthquakes, nuclear melt-downs) to people-connected ones (bloody strikes in the steel mills). Cimino probably felt that a war was conveniently simple and dramatic, and filming it would require no complex or subtle dealing with social processes—not Cimino's strong suit, to say the least. What was crucial structurally was to find stresses that act differentially upon the three men, a dramatic mechanism that could connect the war, felt as the contamination of a pure America by filthy Asians, to the three buddies. Russian roulette, though as far as I can determine it is utterly unknown in Asia, provided this factitious connection.

We might briefly consider the implications of this plot device on the level of cultural stereotype. Asians, like practically every other people, include individuals who like to gamble (in peaceful Bali, cockfighting is a major institution); but in analyzing a script we must talk in terms of dramatic structure, not ethnography or sociology. Why then does the Russian roulette "fit," as audiences evidently feel it does, with the kind of portrayal of friendship that *Deer Hunter* is engaged in?

Here we begin to skate on rather thin Freudian ice. But, emboldened by the fact that the old Viennese master has recently been rehabilitated so enthusiastically in Paris, I shall slip around on it a bit. To begin with, we must take at least somewhat seriously the traditional notion that the gun is a phallic symbol, a particularly male instrument of power and threat and domination. All the critical dramatic scenes in *Deer Hunter* (including the flame-thrower scene) turn on the employment of a gun, either against others—including the difficult friend Stan, and the deer—or oneself. Events of other kinds—the wedding, the party, Michael's visit to Steve in the hospital, Nick's departure from the Saigon hospital—by contrast have a sort of second-class status in the film. They may be ornate photographically, but tend to be inert dramatically, are shot and edited rather lazily, and don't make much sense. The sole exception is the first bar scene, which is choreographed, shot and edited with a languorous beauty, and cut to an affecting song.* In this and other scenes between Michael and Nick, Cimino and his actors manage a kind of intimacy between men which is rarely seen on film. It is not exactly the old Howard Hawks, Boy Scout, sexually pubescent friendship; the Nick character, at least, seems too emotionally sophisticated for that, and there is the insoluble problem of Linda. Nor is it a self-conscious, urban, "relationship-oriented" friendship. It is, in its best moments, at least a passable rendition of an old, established friendship between two men who have deep love and respect for each other.

But there is, of course, a rub. Just as it has been problematic in American films for several years to portray a good relationship between a man and a woman—which has helped to lead, no doubt, to the recent spate of buddy films—so it has become problematic now to portray a good friendship between men. The old Hawksian formula of nonverbalized loyalty, duty, team solidarity seems too simple-minded to use any more. With our greater sophistication about psychology—a legacy in part, ironically, of the great wave of popularized Freudianism that swept America in the forties and fifties—such innocent fantasies have become impossible. And this allows critics to write of *Deer Hunter* as an expression of "homosexual panic."

But the situation is more complicated than that. It is a truism that American men are almost uniformly deeply fearful that affection for another man might have sexual components, and that expressing it might lead to overt sexual contact

*As David Schickele has pointed out to me, however, men in real working-class bars do not spray beer recklessly on expensive pool tables!

and ensuing ill-defined horrors. This powerful phobia is both saddening (because such fear is a damaging impediment to full expression of feelings in male friendships) and exaggerated (*all* friendships have conscious or unconscious erotic components, no matter what the genders or sexual preferences of the persons involved).

It is at least theoretically reasonable that Russian roulette is the symbolic (and Cimino is nothing if not a symbolic director) equivalent of these fears. *Deer Hunter* is certainly not merely a subliminally erotic buddy picture; it is, instead, more like a violent meditation upon the "possibility" of such a drama; its violence, from a Freudian viewpoint, would represent a *repression* of that possibility, and by the "phallic" gun, directed upon the self but controlled by "chance."* As John Simon has astutely noted (*National Review*, 16 Feb. 1979), Nick chooses to pull the trigger (and blows his brains out) just after Michael, who has come to rescue him, finally says, "I love you."

Such, in Cimino's vision, are the perils of *amicitia*, once the most honored of relationships among men. It is also worth noticing that Michael, in order to teach Stan a lesson about fooling around with guns, presses a revolver to *his* head and takes a one-in-six chance of blowing *his* brains out. (Stan functions in the plot as a grossly sexually oriented foil to the other three men's chaste devotion; John, the bar owner, functions as a sort of father figure; Axel functions as the clown.)

And what of the hunting of the deer? It is hard for me to take these sequences seriously, and not only because of the heavenly choirs with which Cimino accompanies the action. I happen to come from Pennsylvania, and still love its soft, rounded, tree-covered eastern mountains. To have DeNiro and friends drive a little while and find themselves in craggy Alpine terrain near treeline—territory that can't be found within 2,000 miles of Pennsylvania—is too much even for me. Especially when DeNiro, after leaping agilely over a few rocks, brings down his mighty stag within about a hundred yards of a nifty studio-built hunting shack. (If deer hunting was that easy, we wouldn't have to worry about the rising price of meat.) The sequences are doubtless intended to establish the dignity of the hunter, and his pride in the exercise of his predatory skills. At the risk of offending my vegetarian friends, I don't find this a dismal objective, but the point is bungled through grandiosity and vagueness. Instead of a symbolic shared celebration of phallic power, Michael does the hunting while Nick tags along and "looks at the trees." Nonetheless, if the deer hunt is the power dream, the Russian roulette is its nightmare counterpart, the phallus turned against itself. Fascination with and fear of the phallus is a persistent theme of Western culture; but we must leave that to students of broad psychocultural phenomena, and content ourselves here with noting the relegation of women, in the world of the phallic nightmare, to secondary status. Women may be some slight palliative, but they are not a significant force. It is men who must cope with the beauty and horror of the gun, and men who compel other men to face its lethal danger. After finally passing his last test, Michael returns home to Linda, in an America symbolically damaged beyond recovery or recompense. One of the friends is dead, one is maimed, and one remains alive to grieve. These men had done "what a man's gotta do." But the blame falls comfortably elsewhere.

Cimino's jingoist attitude toward the Vietnamese is morally and politically reprehensible. But we must remember how close it is to a large segment of American opinion, even anti-Vietnam War opinion. Much opposition to the war was not noble and principled, but merely a feeling either that the war couldn't be won, and ought therefore to be stopped, or that it was a mistake to waste so much blood and treasure on behalf of "those people." *Deer Hunter* mobilizes this quasi-racist feeling very neatly. Moreover, to judge from conversations with Vietnam veterans, I gather that the film catches accurately a prevalent soldier's view of the war: a grudging respect for the Vietcong and NVA, coupled with revulsion for the corrupt, self-serving South Vietnamese. This

*Again to indulge in a Freudian reading, we may remember that fantasies of rape—no matter the sexual-preference or gender situation involved—commonly function to "allow" sexual pleasure since it is not the victim's "responsibility." But it is not only pleasure which can be thus freed of usual emotional restraints—so can aggression; and, at least symbolically, even against the self.

attitude, of course, is precisely the opposite of the "bringing the war home" attempted by *Coming Home* or *Who'll Stop the Rain;* but, like them, *Deer Hunter* obfuscates and mystifies the systematic causes of the war, which lay in American policies. But then, considering how obscure virtually everything is in this puzzling film, that should be no surprise.

—ERNEST CALLENBACH

Reviews

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

Director: Peter Weir. Script by Cliff Green, based on the novel by Joan Lindsay. Photography: Russell Boyd. Atlantic Releasing Corp.

The Hanging Rock in the title of this powerfully unnerving film by Australian director Peter Weir is a centuries-old volcanic eruption forty miles from Melbourne. It is the monolith that dominates all other images on the screen in precisely the same way it looms above objects in its surrounding countryside—it is the focal point for the world around it, the measure for everyone and everything in view.

In the film the Rock is also the site of a St. Valentine's Day outing, planned for the students of Appleyard College, a Victorian "finishing school" for young ladies. The year is 1900. Though the film opens on this factual note, there is from the outset a sense that human reality is both relative and illusory, an impression conveyed on several different levels. Anne Lambert, in the central role of Miranda, informs us by means of a voice-over that "What we see and what we seem are but a dream; a dream within a dream"; the Shakespearean echo is almost superfluous, however, as Russell Boyd's cinematography unfolds in a series of images so lush and chimerical that they seem less the product of his camera than the result of brush-strokes by the elder Renoir.

On screen, Miranda wakes to the dream-life of Appleyard—one which is familiar to us all in its apparent order, security and control. Its artificiality and repressiveness are also uncomfortably recognizable. The opening sequence of St. Valentine's morning is characterized by the excitement of the girls' exchange of greetings among themselves and their teachers. It closes, however, with the haunting image of one of the girls imprisoning a rose in a flower-press. What had been a delicate, vital blossom becomes a beautiful, dead icon.

The pressing of the rose emblematically depicts the emotional ambiance of the school. The symbol of eternal love is closed in the airless device just as the affection between Miranda and Sara (Margaret Nelson), an orphan and the school's youngest boarder, is enclosed in a social context which makes it inverted and incapable of further growth. While Miranda ambivalently warns Sara that she must learn to love others, she simultaneously extends the hope that Sara will one day visit Miranda's family. The ambiguity of the girls' relationship is a touchstone for the emotional bonding of the inhabitants of Appleyard.

Appleyard is a hot-house Eden. Its blossoms would not survive in natural settings, and Miranda at least seems hesitantly aware of their fragility. The film is threaded with various kinds of incipiently lesbian relationships. An exchange of Valentines among the schoolgirls is seen as a natural outgrowth of the intensity of friendships established in the confines of a girls' boarding school. The Valentines sent to their teachers, when not small jokes, are evidence of heroine-worship. The affection of Mlle. de Poitiers (Helen Morse) for her charges seems based mainly on aesthetic grounds—it is she who articulates the resemblance of Miranda to a Botticelli angel. But there is a darker underside to the emotional life of Appleyard, and it is hinted at in Sara's morbid preoccupation with Miranda, alive or dead. An even darker shading is apparent in the twisted, quasi-sadistic responses of some of the adult teachers to their students, especially in the character of Mrs. Appleyard (Rachel Roberts). What is of importance in the film is not the nature of the sexual passion, but the ways in which it is either expressed or repressed.

Much of the film rests on a polarity between the conscious and the unconscious; light and dark, exposed and hidden. The very mode of celebrating Valentine's Day is significant. The

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pagan, Roman celebration honoring Juno, patroness of women, and Pan, the god of nature, has been transformed by Christianity into a martyr's feast-day. Pagan rituals have been abandoned, except for the exchange of love tokens. The ancient celebration of womanhood and nature has been suppressed, but nonetheless lies waiting beneath centuries of repression—waiting to surface again.

For the girls of Appleyard the celebration is to be limited to a picnic. The journey from Appleyard to Hanging Rock is a movement out of civilization in more than one sense. The girls are accompanied on their holiday by Miss McCraw (Vivean Gray), the mathematics mistress, and Mlle. de Poitiers, the French and dancing mistress. The world they enter is timeless, and the portrayal of it is achieved by a display of filmmaking virtuosity that is overwhelming in its grace and terrible beauty.

The photography is, quite literally, resplendent. Boyd bathes the screen in a succession of shimmering images which in lesser hands might have degenerated into cliché. There are, for example, slow-motion sequences of the four girls at various stages of their ascent; soft-focus shots of them perfectly at one with the preternatural beauty of the wilds in which they find themselves; a freeze-frame of Miranda as she turns to wave a last farewell, and hauntingly evocative images of a white swan, juxtaposed with close-ups of Miranda. All of these devices serve to reinforce the ever-present movement of the girls from the world of reality into the world of myth.

Mlle. de Poitiers speaks for the viewer when she voices her admiration for the beauty of youth, and her awe of the Hanging Rock. Miss McCraw, on the other hand, is irritated by human company and preoccupied by the Rock solely as physical object. She explains to the company that Hanging Rock is a result of "lava, forced up from deep down below, where it has lain for a million years." The response from one of the students, "Just think, a million years . . . waiting just for us," is indicative of both the self-centeredness of childish thinking, and the process of acculturation which has taught her that humanity is the center of the universe. There is, of course, an ironic truth lying much deeper than she realizes in her words; her own notion of their truth is woefully unrealized, however.

How untrue her notion is becomes apparent only gradually as the film, and the picnic, evolve. The first hints of it come from the soundtrack: the use of Gheorghe Zamphier's Pan Pipes is insidious and mesmerizing. The notes from the pipes, echoing an ageless music of the hills begins early in the film to indicate the powerful presence of something primeval. It is played in counterpoint to the sophisticated music of Beethoven's Fifth Piano Concerto, the music of the civilized world. These two strains of music, then, struggle for attention and dominance throughout the film.

But the eeriness of the sound track is compelling not only for what is heard, but also for what is not heard. Weir uses great blocks of silence, unbroken by either the ghostly Pan Pipes or the measured, reassuring concerto. Except for the occasional buzz of insects, or the rustle of leaves by animals, an ominous silence prevails. Its effect is to impart a strange quality, bordering on the horrific, to the superficially familiar, natural setting. It is also strikingly kinaesthetic: the heat and the langor it produces come not only from watching the sun-drenched images on the screen, but also from the impending weight of the near-silence. Above all, there is a continuous and growing apprehension produced by the absence of sound.

The visual impact of the Hanging Rock itself conveys an overwhelming sense of animism that is the hallmark of this film. The Rock, an ur-cathedral complete with gargoyle-like figures embedded in its heights, creates the film's most disturbing reactions. As the camera scans its surface, while the Pan Pipes play, it produces

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK ▶

the effect of a temple housing a hundred ancient faces gazing at the picnickers below.

What happens on Hanging Rock is the enigma at the center of the film. It is the question asked by everyone—character and viewer alike. No explicit answers, apart from the unfolding of the film, and our experience of it, are given; implicit ones are.

Literally what happens is that four schoolgirls —Miranda, Marion (Jane Vallis), Irma (Karen Robson), and Edith (Christine Schuler)—begin a climb of Hanging Rock. Edith, the youngest, turns back, a victim of hysteria; Irma is found one week later, a victim of amnesia; the other two girls are never seen again. To compound the complexities of the plot, at some point in the day's confusion Miss McCraw also ascends the Rock, and she too is lost forever. The questions, "How?" and "Why?" are the axes on which the remainder of the film spins.

A closer look at the ascent of the Rock, and at the Rock itself, is helpful. As the four girls climb, Marion, the intellectual among the group, notices the people below. They include not only the other members of the Appleyard party, but another separate group of holiday-makers: the young, Hon. Michael Fitzhubert (Dominic Guard), his aunt and uncle, and their coachman, Albert (John Jarratt). They are the representatives of the larger world of which Appleyard is but a corner. It is a world of flux, less isolated and less insular than Appleyard, and consequently less secure in its perceptions of both the larger natural order and the parochial, social order of things. Michael, visiting from England, is for example both highly attracted to, and simultaneously repelled by, his initial association with the coachman. In a scene of gentle seductiveness, which underlines the homoerotic quality of the emotional life of the characters of the film, they forge an alliance for themselves, and a vision for the audience of the girls of Appleyard.

Marion, however, achieves a far wider vision. In reflecting on the people below, she comments that "a surprising number of human beings are without purpose, though it is probable that they are performing some function unknown to themselves." In this observation is a key to at least one perception of the meaning of the Rock, and the events of Valentine's Day, 1900. Marion implies that the human activity below, as seen from the heights of the Rock, is meaningless except within the context of some grander design. It is as if she is speaking for the forces which have caused the eruption of the Rock itself. Such forces might speak of human activity in the same terms the girls themselves apply to the group below: "Like a lot of ants . . ." The analogy to the instinctual world of ants raises the question of whether human beings also function by merely fulfilling the designs of forces larger and more powerful than themselves.

Miranda, as usual, provides an answer of sorts: "Everything begins and ends at exactly the right time and place." She, like her namesake in *The Tempest,* has discovered a brave, new world. She and the others scale the Rock and transcend the limits of their civilized lives. They literally are lost on the Rock. Metaphorically, they are exploring the hidden depths of an instinctual world—a world of sensuality and passion. The ascent of the Rock functions as a primitive rite of passage for the young women, and the vehicle of this experience seems to be an acceptance of their existence as sexual beings.

For Hanging Rock is not only a temple-like edifice, but also an emblem of human sexuality. The topmost peaks are phallic; the caves and narrow passages below are vaginal in structure and contour. The realization that the Rock is an objectification of an interior world as well, is accomplished by the prolific use of unusual camera angles in the Rock sequences. There are a number of low-angle and high-angle shots executed from within the crevices and caverns of the structure that create the hair-raising sensation that something, or someone, is watching the young people in their struggles up the cliffs. But the eye of the camera, hidden in the Rock, is our own as well. *We* are buried in the Rock. Or our instinctual selves are—a truth that is discovered in the film by at least two survivors of the experience who live to tell the tale.

One of them is Irma, who is found a week after the outing by Michael Fitzhubert. During the intervening week, Michael has been obsessed by his fleeting, first and last vision of the young women, particularly the swan-like Miranda. He returns to the rock to look for her, accompanied by Albert. After a day's search, Michael insists

on remaining behind for the night while Albert returns to the family home. The next day, on his return, Albert finds Michael feverish, shaken, and lying on the ground clutching a piece of lace from a woman's dress.

The two young people are brought home and neither is able to remember or speak of the experience of Hanging Rock. The only evidence of that experience is a cut in the forehead, above the right eye of each. Otherwise they are, as the examining physician reports, "intact." The scars on their brows mark them for the audience as having been singled out, or made different by some ineffable experience. Like Cain, they are marked as outsiders and are condemned to live differently from their peers.

A striking visual demonstration of their enforced isolation occurs after Irma's recuperation. Her return to the school, for a ten-minute farewell, is announced by Mlle. de Poitiers to the other pupils while they are sullenly exercising in the school's "Temple of Gymnastics." The Irma who re-enters the lives of her schoolmates is not the Irma they have known. She is no longer a child, but a woman, swathed in a red traveling ensemble; her appearance causes an outbreak of mass hysteria among the girls. After a prolonged, initial silence they set upon her, clawing and screaming questions, all of which are variations on *the* question, "What happened on Hanging Rock?"

The disappearance of the women on the Rock, and the reappearance of the survivors, Irma and Michael, cause hysterial reactions among others as well. Mrs. Appleyard's disintegration is the most visibly dramatic. Rachel Roberts's performance is chillingly believable. Dependent upon alcohol to help her through difficult situations, Mrs. Appleyard increases her drinking in the face of the probable financial collapse of Appleyard as parents begin announcing the withdrawal of their daughters as students there. As her drinking increases, the sadism which has been swimming in her blood surfaces and seeks as its main prey the young Sara Waybourne. After a dinner with Mlle. de Poitiers in which the headmistress begins by reminiscing about past holidays with her deceased husband—holidays which were always comforting and secure in their predictability and sameness, she drunkenly and insanely lapses into an anguished outcry, both for and against the vanished mathematics mistress, Greta McCraw: "How could she have just wandered off? I had grown so much to depend on her masculine spirit . . ." She recovers momentarily, though not in time to placate the horrified Mlle. de Poitiers. The tortured woman's decompensation is almost complete as she makes a late-night visit to Sara to tell the child that she will be returned to the institution from which she came. The last shot of the sequence is of Sara's empty bed. The following morning, the headmistress announces to Mademoiselle that Sara's guardian has come unexpectedly to take her away, and the matter is to be closed to discussion. Discussion *is* terminated; discovery is not.

The college gardener, Mr. Whitehead (Frank Gunnell), who functions as something of a chorus in the drama, enters the greenhouse on his morning rounds to find Sara dead among the hot-house flowers she loved. It is apparent that she has crashed through the glass roof of the greenhouse from the heights of the college building. How, and why, remain unanswered questions here too. As Mr. Whitehead has explained in an earlier sequence to Tom, the college handyman, "Some questions got answers and some haven't." It is a fitting epitaph for Sara, and an equally fitting epigraph for the entire film.

The close of the film, then, provides no factual answers, only more questions. But then, questions are the essence of this film. The viewer is left with the sensation of having encountered a visual representation of several human beings' involvement with an almost "motiveless malignancy." At least that is one perspective. For there is little doubt that the film is terrifyingly effective as a foray into the supernatural. But like all great horror films, it succeeds in making the psychological realities one cannot see even more fearful than those events outwardly depicted on the screen.

Another perspective requires that one view the events of the Picnic at Hanging Rock as taking place in a realm that is limited neither by the natural nor the supernatural—the realm of art. The film works best when seen in terms of visual metaphor. In the party of schoolgirls who picnic at the Rock, there are several who never return to Appleyard. They transcend its limits and free

themselves from the conventions of a narrow and repressive world. By doing so they are absorbed into a world that is more mysterious, more powerful, and ultimately more disturbing than that which we are comfortable.

The impact of the film lies in just that ability to make its audiences uncomfortable. The credit for this achievement must go to its director and his screenwriter, Cliff Green, as well as to its photographer, Russell Boyd. The film is aesthetically a visual masterpiece; its sound track one of the most unforgettable in recent years. But in its suggestion that there is far more to our lives than the tiny framework within which we allow ourselves to interpret so-called reality, it is totally unsettling.

We are forced to recall Miranda's injunction that we are all dreams: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep." *Picnic at Hanging Rock* may be a dream, but its audiences will have difficulty rounding off their viewing of it with sleep for many nights after the dream has faded from the screen. —ED ROGINSKI

BRIAN HENDERSON

Bazin Defended Against His Devotees

I wept as I remembered how often you
and I
Had laughed about Los Angeles and now
'tis here you'll lie;
Here pickled in formaldehyde and painted
like a whore,
Shrimp-pink incorruptible, not lost nor
gone before.

—Evelyn Waugh, *The Loved One*

The devotees that this article defends Bazin against include François Truffaut, Eric Rohmer, and Dudley Andrew. Going beyond the devotees and their claims, we will argue the relevance of Bazin's criticism to the present by showing the unrealized suggestiveness of a few of his critical notions.

We defend Bazin the critic, not Bazin the theorist. The latter we have critiqued in "Two Types of Film Theory" and others have critiqued in other pieces. Nor do we concern ourselves with the relations between Bazin's theoretical ideas, such as his filmic ontology, and his criticism. That topic was treated by us in "The Structure of Bazin's Thought," which argued a split between Bazin's theory and his historical-critical work and the various attempts by him to make conceptual bridges between the two. We are concerned with Bazin's criticism as criticism, in itself and in its impact on later work—including that not yet done. We will look especially at a Bazinian distinction between two kinds of director, exemplified by Vittorio De Sica and Roberto Rossellini, and at its reverberations in later film criticism. We will also look briefly at Bazin's analyses of *mise-en-scène* and narrative technique in Rossellini, noting how uncannily well they fit films made by him after Bazin's death in 1958. As an example of this, we will apply Bazin's notion of Rossellini's method as "synthetic and elliptical" to a later Rossellini film, *The Rise to Power of Louis XIV* (1966).

François Truffaut has cast himself as the proprietor of the memory of André Bazin, perhaps from the time of Bazin's death in 1958, but more pointedly in a series of writings he has devoted to Bazin since 1971. Since 1971 Truffaut has written the preface or foreword to seven books concerning Bazin. Two were for American books, Hugh Gray's translation of *What Is Cinema? Vol. II* (1971) and Dudley Andrew's *André Bazin* (1978). Five were for French books, two of which have been translated, Bazin's *Jean Renoir* (1971; 1973) and *Orson Welles* (1972; 1978). The preface to a collection of Bazin pieces, *Charlie Chaplin* (1973) is translated in *The Films in My Life* (1975; 1978), though the book itself is untranslated. Also un-

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translated are two 1975 collections, mainly of previously unpublished material, *Le Cinéma de la cruauté* and *Le Cinéma de l'occupation et de la résistance*, both with prefaces by Truffaut. The introduction to his own book, *The Films in My Life*, has a few mentions of Bazin, though his introduction to *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (1970; 1971) does not mention him, even though it is autobiographical in nature.

By editing the unfinished Renoir and Welles books and the two 1975 collections, Truffaut becomes the curator of the Bazin museum as well as the proprietor of his memory. How does Truffaut perform his archival tasks? We might wish to obtain Bazin's uncollected writings and unfinished books at a faster rate and with more exact scholarship; but how many scholars take even longer to get their books out and do not make a feature film a year? Perhaps there is no Bazin book that would not have appeared without Truffaut's participation (though we do not know this), but there can be no doubt that Truffaut, far more widely known than Bazin, has contributed significantly to the dissemination of Bazin's work. In so doing he has also created a myth of André Bazin: this is our concern here. But we have undeniable cause to be grateful for Truffaut's editing and sponsorship.

Writing a number of forewords does not thereby make one the proprietor of one's subject's memory. But Truffaut has been on hand to remember Bazin and to introduce his work on nearly every official occasion since at least 1971. He has written foreword, preface, or introduction to all but one or two Bazin books that have appeared in French or English in the seventies. Truffaut asserts his proprietary role in other ways also, for example in presenting Dudley Andrews's biography of Bazin.

> Though I was the intimate friend of Bazin and became, you might say, his adopted son, until a time when I felt I was actually becoming a brother to him, I nevertheless knew only one part of his life. And even here this biography has revealed to me all sorts of details I had no notion of.[1]

Truffaut confers his approval on someone else's biography of his subject in a rhetorical form that consolidates his own role the more strongly: Andrew turns up things that *even I did not know*.

What qualifies Truffaut to be Bazin's editor and introducer? First, his historical association with him and close memories of him. This is a figure of the culture generally, underlying the institution of the foreword itself. The foreword provides a glimpse of the author himself, something beyond his mere words: direct testimony of his being. The person most qualified to do this is the one who knew him best; but that person should ideally be a figure of culture himself, for his task is to mediate the realm of being and the realm of the word, to render the one into the other. One of the functions of the foreword writer is therefore to qualify himself as bearer of the privileged vision of the dead author. I knew X, I saw Y. I was the man, I was there. It follows that every foreword necessarily concerns both the object of the foreword and its writer. Moreover, by the nature of foreword-writing, these terms cannot be separate or fixed—they are interrelated and interactive. It is a double-mirror operation: the foreword-writer establishes his involvement with the author. A certain image of the author is projected. This image necessarily reflects the writer of the foreword in a certain way. He casts a light on his subject that reflects back on him. He projects an image that projects an image of him.

What does Truffaut remember of Bazin? The same stories, comparisons, observations, praises, even verbal constructions turn up in Truffaut's various writings on Bazin. He was kind, he was logical, everyone loved him, his goodness was legendary—it even embarrassed his young followers like Truffaut. Truffaut spends far more time on Bazin the Good Man than on Bazin the critic. As for Bazin's work, Truffaut notes many times that Bazin was not a critic, he was a writer of the cinema. He did not evaluate films, he described them superbly and showed how they were made. He was "something more than a critic: a veritable *écrivain de cinéma*." And on another occasion: "More than a critic, he was a 'writer of the cinema,' striving to describe films rather than to judge them." Truffaut's repeated insistence on this point in his seventies pieces—it is absent from his 1959 *Cahiers* memorial of Bazin—recalls his admission in the introduction to *The Films in My Life* (1978):

> American critics seem to me better than the European critics . . . By a simple law of life, we quite easily adopt notions that serve our purpose. And it is true that American critics have been more positive about my films than my compatriots have. So watch out.[2]

It is almost entirely in the seventies pieces that Truffaut creates the myth of André Bazin the Good Man and André Bazin the Uncritical Critic. It might be that Truffaut did this in reaction to hostile French criticism, especially left criticism, of his work in the late sixties and seventies. Andrew Sarris, not a Marxist, noted that in *Stolen Kisses* (1968) Antoine Doinel watches a student demonstration on television as though it were an event taking place on another planet. Against his compatriots, Truffaut resurrects the ideal figure of Bazin to stand over and dwarf harsh, dismissive critics, who merely reflect their own times. In this vein Truffaut cites in one place the unprecedented praise of Bazin by film-makers at his death and, in another, Bazin's refusal to dismiss Kurosawa, as others did, because Mizoguchi was greater. "Unquestionably anyone who prefers Kurosawa must be incurably blind but anyone who loves only Mizoguchi is one-eyed. Throughout the arts there runs a vein of the contemplative and mystical as well as an expressionist vein." This comes from the 1971 foreword to the English edition of *What Is Cinema? Vol. II*, apparently the first Bazin preface that Truffaut did: It is tempting to read Godard for Mizoguchi and Truffaut for Kurosawa. In the 1977 foreword to Dudley Andrew's biography, Truffaut says

> Bazin was forty when he died; he would have been nearly sixty today and his presence would have helped to dissipate the thick fog in which cinematographic reflection finds itself. To be a critic in 1978 is much more difficult than it was in 1958, first of all because production has become enormously diversified at the same time that the ambitions of filmmakers have grown. Nowadays, at the end of any given year of cinema, it is much more difficult for a dozen observers of good faith to agree on the titles of those films which have a chance for survival.[3]

There is an important diachronic dimension to Truffaut's promotion of the Bazin myth—it changes: though Bazin has not changed since 1958, Truffaut's statements about him have changed. The specific direction of change is toward greater and greater idealization of Bazin. Our point of reference must be Truffaut's statement in the January 1959 memorial *Cahiers* issue on Bazin, "It was Good To Be Alive." In this piece alone is there a sense of flesh and blood and a fresh taste of grief. Besides saying as usual that Bazin was "a father to me" and "I am probably the one he helped the most" and "his intelligence . . . kindness . . . honesty . . . logic" and "he remained himself on every circumstance," there are other remarks that occur only here. "He had bitter memories of his stay in the Army and his career as a teacher," and "he could sketch psychoanalytic portraits of people that were astonishingly accurate." In the later forewords, Bazin has no bitter memories and he is far too busy being saintly to people to sketch them psychoanalytically. Even a note in the 1959 statement about what happened "once his indignation was aroused" does not occur again. How far from this to Truffaut's remark in the 1971 foreword to *What Is Cinema? Vol. II.*: "If I were asked to give a picture of André Bazin the first thing that would occur to me would be a caption from an American magazine: "The most unforgettable character I've met." (p. v)

Truffaut's presentation of himself also changes from 1959 to the 1970s. There is a note about himself in the 1959 piece that is dropped from all his later statements.

> I was languishing in the prison of Dupleix Barracks in Paris, along with a handful of deserters from the French battalion in Korea. There were a dozen of us in a cell built for four; the August heat and the smell of urine emanating from an old tin can made the air unbreathable; we would take turns climbing up along the door to breathe the air coming through a window overlooking the courtyard.[4]

Compare this passage to one in the 1970 Introduction to *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel:*

> I experienced at first hand what I show in *The Four-Hundred Blows:* the cages in the police station with the prostitutes, the ride in the police van, the criminal-records routine and the prison cells; without going into all the ugly details, I can testify that what I went through was considerably tougher than what is shown in the film.[5]

How one misses the smell of piss in everything that Truffaut has done since *The Four-Hundred Blows.*

It must be said, however, that Bazin contributed to the joint myths too, at least by dedicating Tome I of *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma?* to Roger Leenhardt and François Truffaut. In that Leenhardt was Bazin's ancestor in writing about films for *Espirit* and in other ways, the joint dedication pointedly declares Truffaut his heir. An odd, oblique consequence of this that neither Bazin nor many others "would ever have dared imagine" is Truffaut's appearance as the international scientist in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*

(1977). Who is this intelligent, kind, honest, logical man, who treats all creatures the same but the Bazin of Truffaut's myth? When he shakes hands with the diminutive space person (the young Truffaut?), we realize that Truffaut has simultaneously taken over the Bazin role in his myth and reduced it to a cartoon.

Eric Rohmer is a serious and distinguished film scholar. He wrote *Hitchcock* with Claude Chabrol in 1957. In 1977 he published his 1972 doctoral dissertation, "L'organisation de l'espace dans le 'Faust' de Murnau." We are not interested here in Rohmer's critical work as a whole nor in his overall view of Bazin and its changes from year to year. We are interested in only one writing, his review of *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma, Tome I* in 1959, because it states strongly one approach to Bazin.

> Each essay and indeed the whole work itself fits perfectly into the pattern of a mathematical demonstration. Without any doubt, the whole body of Bazin's work is based on one central idea, an affirmation of the objectivity of the cinema in the same way as all geometry is centered on the properties of the straight line.[6]

Rohmer suggests the independence of the axiom to its particular applications. Thus Bazin should not be treated as bound to the films he chose to discuss: neorealism and depth of focus may give way to other styles and techniques without affecting Bazin's argument. Bazin was not fundamentally concerned with these movements and techniques but with cinema's link to reality.

Rohmer's piece is not concerned with Bazin the good man, but with Bazin the logician. Whether this image of Bazin is less a myth than Truffaut's remains to be seen.

Dudley Andrew's biography indulges somewhat in both myths. There are pages on Bazin's love of animals and his kindness to humans, but for the most part Andrew stays with events, friends, writings, and intellectual milieu. Indeed nearly half the book deals with the intellectual and other influences that formed Bazin: personalism, existentialism, Leenhardt, *Travail et Culture*, etc. The second half of the book is largely devoted to tracing the writing of Bazin's major articles, but this continues the inquiry of the first half because it emphasizes the relation of the articles to the intellectual matrix that formed Bazin. This emphasis slights many things we want to know: Bazin's interactions with Godard, Chabrol, Rohmer, Rivette, Renoir, Rossellini, Buñuel, Leenhardt, etc. It also tends to be idealist if not solipsistic: minds create ideas out of other ideas. Account for those influences and their consequences (usually seen as simple applications) and you've done the job of intellectual biography. On the whole—perhaps just because it is a full-length study—Andrew's book takes a step away from the mythological Bazin, though it does not entirely detach itself from the phantasm created by the projections of his devotees, and indeed in part contributes to it.

The approaches to Bazin of Truffaut, Rohmer, and Andrew are quite distinct, though they also share important features. Indeed, consider the possibility that their differences mask a common structure, that they are subsets of a single conceptual set. First, all posit Bazin's work as a unity of some sort; second, all three approaches tie up Bazin in a completed past, however differently conceived. The effect of both features is to seal Bazin and his influence in the past and, despite what appears to be the case, to deny his influence to the present.

It is clear that Truffaut's Good Man Bazin, whom he compares to *Good Sam*, is locked in the past, in the perfect unity of his goodness. No more will he touch another heart. As for his work, one wonders sometimes how much Truffaut believes in it, except as grist for the memorial. He says of *Jean Renoir*, "the best book by the best critic on the best director," but three superlatives without elaboration is a little hollow. (Truffaut does not say this for the Orson Welles book—Peter Bogdanovich does: "The most influential modern film critic writing about the most influential modern film director—who could ask for anything more?") As for Bazin's influence, is there not sometimes a suggestion that Bazin has had his important influence already—on Truffaut himself? Beyond this, Truffaut's attitude to Bazin seems sometimes oddly protective. His claims for Bazin are very general and idealized, as though he was not sure what specific claims to make for him. Oddly, Andrew's book makes no overall claims for Bazin either.

Rohmer's unity thesis is ultimate: Bazin had one idea, which was so pure that even applications and extensions do not dilute it. The latter are in any case dispensable and superfluous. Rohmer's thesis keeps Bazin rolled up in the past, indeed within his own past. It denies even

the time of Bazin's life and work as so much secondary elaboration of an idea that was pure from its inception.

In presenting the intellectual sources of Bazin's work, Andrew's book necessarily moves away from the present and toward the past. He moves forward in time to show how a Mounier or Leenhardt idea shapes a later Bazin text; but this is a two-way trolley between early Bazin and late Bazin—it never gets to the present. In Andrew's case, the issue of the unity of Bazin or of his work is treated more complexly. He flirts with the notion that Bazin's life was a unity in a more sophisticated version of Truffaut's St. Francis image. He even anchors the point with a sketch of Bazin's childhood in the country. He is tempted by but resists Rohmer's thesis of Bazin's intellectual unity. Andrew shows that personalism stressed the necessity of engagement with the world, with the other, and that Bazin's work reflects this.

> Thus Rohmer may be correct in asserting that Bazin's theory goes far beyond the films he speaks of, but the impetus to develop such a theory was derived from specific films seen within the specific context of personalism. Film is not mathematics. One does not begin theorizing about it in the abstract. Bazin brought to his study of film a complex notion of reality and man's place within it.[7]

The unity that emerges from Andrew's book is that of a man and his times. Andrew traces Bazin as a thread—a thinking thread—weaving itself into the fabric of its intellectual and social context. Bazin in his times, Bazin in relation to his time, Bazin and his times, make a whole, a unity, something perfect, finished, complete, sufficient unto itself. (Is this itself something like the personalist view? Personalism may be not only a topic in Andrew's saga of André Bazin but the ideological orientation of his book itself.)

What all the devotees lack is a sense of how to use Bazin. One is not sure that they want to use him. All tend to seal Bazin and his work into a completed past, unified, perfect, inaccessible to the present. They all stand vigil at the memorial. The torch is not passed.

None of the work we have considered is transitive. None moves from Bazin to the present, or even toward it. A new reading or presentation of a critic will usually relate the work to the critical present, to make it relevant and useful in new, unforeseen ways. At least it will sum up or state strongly the bearing of the figure on the present. The failure even to attempt this is the most amazing aspect of the work of Bazin's devotees.

One need hardly argue the influence of Bazin's writings on later film scholarship. It would be a laborious demonstration, but useful. One wishes Andrew had done it—A Survey of Bazinian Scholarship—as Chapter 8 of his book, or as an appendix. But we are more interested in something else: Bazin's influence today and tomorrow, his unrealized influence, what he has to say to the cutting edge of contemporary film criticism (if there are two people who can agree on what that is). Our question is—Why read Bazin today? To read him as classic, as necessary film culture places him in the past, where the devotees venerate. Is there any other reason to read Bazin now?

A precondition for a new reading of Bazin is to shatter the image of the unity of Bazin's work, insisted on by his devotees. Quite simply, we must be willing to read each of Bazin's critical pieces on its own terms. To paraphrase Oscar Wilde, there are two ways not to read Bazin. One is not to read him, the other is to read every piece as an emanation of his ontology, and to dismiss it on that ground. Certain sophisticated journals like *Ça* and *Screen* do this regularly.

"The Structure of Bazin's Thought" demonstrates a theoretical economy for reading Bazin's criticism apart from his ontological theory of film.

> There is no logical connection or carry-over between the "Ontology" and the critical work . . . The historical criticism . . . is internally structured by an art-historical division of function between period-style analyses and criticism of individual artists and works within these periods . . . This context defines and controls the meaning of all terms used within it.
>
> The individual essays sometimes use the term 'realism' . . . to describe the particular qualities of a director's style: he speaks of Visconti's "aesthetic realism," Fellini's "poetic realism," etc. In this usage, it is not the term "realism" itself, but how Bazin qualifies that term that is the center of the critical act. "Realism" becomes the name of the problem to be solved, a kind of "X." When Bazin has defined the kind of realism a director practices, he has defined his style.[8]

This theoretical model urges the disunity of Bazin's corpus and calls for a differentiated reading of each of his writings. It resembles the eating of the dead rich man by his heirs in *Satyricon* rather than the Holy Eucharist, in which all of

God is present in every piece of broken bread.

Let us take a figure of equal interest to Bazin and to us: Roberto Rossellini. The problem of Rossellini cuts through modern film criticism. He has been of central interest, at different times, to neorealists, oldline communists, and humanists; to the fifties *Cahiers* group, who heralded his films with Ingrid Bergman as the dawn of a new cinema; to Marxists of the Brecht-Godard era, interested in his antispectacular historical films; to semioticians and materialists like the *Screen* group, who devoted one issue (v. 14/4, Winter 1973-4) and part of another issue (v.15/1, Spring 1974) to Rossellini.

But no approach to Rossellini has been completely successful at any time. Perhaps none has been very successful at all. There has been no systematic study of Rossellini and no complete critical account of his work by any method. Almost two years after his death, almost forty years after the making of his first film, Rossellini is still very much in question, in a way that Fellini, Bergman, Antonioni—even Godard—are not. Indeed there may be more doubt about his methods and meanings now than there ever has been. An indication of this is the Winter 1973-4 *Screen* issue, which has no criticial writing on Rosellini whatever, let alone a critical approach. It limited itself to presenting background materials on Rossellini, mostly in translation—three interviews, a statement by the film-maker, and an article on the neorealist ideological milieu by Mario Canella—postponing to the future a critical confrontation with Rossellini.

What do we find in Bazin on Rossellini that we do not find in the work mentioned above? We do not find a systematic study or complete critical account in any sense. Bazin does not provide an overview of Rossellini—he does not even deal fully with any one film by him. But Bazin's writings on Rossellini, brief and fragmentary as they are, are suggestive in ways that other writing on him has not been. Bazin discusses Rossellini in at least four texts: "De Sica, Metteur en Scene" (1951); "An Aesthetic of Reality: Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of the Liberation" (1948); "*Europa 51*" (1951); and "In Defense of Rossellini" (1955).[9] The De Sica piece was an introduction to an Italian book on De Sica. Rossellini is brought in as contrast in order to define two kinds of director and two kinds of *mise-en-scène*. After seeing *The Bicycle Thief* and *Miracle in Milan*, the two mature films of De Sica (whom Bazin calls a "genius" and "a director of the first order"), Bazin still cannot determine "the permanent and definitive characteristics of their maker's talent," hence he has no idea what De Sica will make next. The reason is that De Sica is one of those directors whose sole purpose is to interpret their scenarios faithfully, whose one method of work seems to be to treat their subject honestly.

> (His neutrality) divides up the output of the film maker into so many special cases that, given one more film, all that has preceded it might be called into question. It is a temptation therefore to see only craftsmanship where one is looking for style, the generous humility of a clever technician meeting the demands of the subject instead of the creative imprint of a true *auteur*.[10]

By contrast, Bazin could have deduced the permanent and definitive characteristics of Rossellini's talent after *Open City* and *Paisà*. His style belongs to a different aesthetic family, in which a vision of the world and the *mise-en-scène* are closely related. Rossellini's style is a way of seeing (while De Sica's is primarily a way of feeling); his *mise-en-scene* lays siege to the object from outside.

> Rossellini's direction comes between his material and us, not as an artificial obstacle set up between the two, but as an unbridgeable, ontological distance, a congenital weakness of the human being which expresses itself aesthetically in terms of space, in forms, in the structure of the *mise-en-scène*. Because we are aware of it as a lack, a refusal, an escape from things, and hence finally as a kind of pain, it follows that it is easier for us to be aware of it, easier for us to reduce it to a formal method. Rossellini cannot alter this without himself passing through a personal moral revolution.[11]

Note that the next generation of film critics, the auteurists, accepted Bazin's distinction between De Sica and Rossellini as two fundamentally different kinds of director and also his grounds for the distinction. What was different were the *values* with which they invested the distinction. Bazin was sincere in calling De Sica a genius; for him De Sica had and would always have a very high place among the great directors, not far below Rossellini himself. The younger generation elevated Rossellini to the stratosphere and dropped De Sica entirely, strictly on Bazin's grounds. To them cleverness in adapting a scenario to the

screen was nothing; formulating a *mise-en-scène* that was a vision of the world and that one imposed on every piece of material one dealt with—was everything.

The auteurist critics revered Rossellini but they actually wrote rather little about him. There are fewer auteur studies of Rossellini than of Hitchcock, Hawks, Renoir, or a dozen others. It may be that they did not quite know what to do with him. It may be that they deferred to Bazin on this subject (even when he was silent), either accepting what he said or otherwise declining to compete with him. But Rossellini made an enormous impact on the younger generation nonetheless—something we deduce from their shouts of glory and other elliptical remarks about him. In June 1959 Godard said "In a future issue, I shall show why *India* [1958] is the creation of the world."[12] He never did, becoming not the last and probably not the first film critic to renege on a promise to explain Rossellini. Instead, one is tempted to say, he shot *Breathless* (in August 1959) and a number of other films that betray knowledge of the "aesthetic secrets" of Rossellini, without however betraying the secrets themselves. These he kept to himself.

Truffaut's piece on Rossellini, "Roberto Rossellini Prefers Real Life," was written in 1963. He says that "Rossellini doesn't really like cinema particularly, any more than he cares for the arts in general. He prefers life, he prefers man." Truffaut recounts that he was Rossellini's assistant for three years, in which the master did not shoot a single foot of film.

> Was I influenced by Rossellini? By all means. His severity, his seriousness, his thoughtfulness freed me from some of the complacent enthusiasm I'd felt for American movies. Rossellini detests clever titles, especially with scenes preceding them, flashbacks, and everything in general that's included simply for decoration, everything that does not serve the film's intention or the character development.
>
> In some of my films I've tried to follow a single character simply and honestly in an almost documentary manner, and I owe this method to Rossellini.[13]

In what Truffaut films has he *not* followed this method? In two or three at most. Truffaut also described Rossellini's meeting with the "new wave"-to-be in the fifties, seeing their short films, encouraging them, helping them to get backing when they moved to features. Truffaut calls him "the father of the new wave." This dossier is not only open, as far as Anglo-American film criticism and film history are concerned, it is virtually empty. James Monaco's recent *The New Wave* has half a dozen references to Rossellini, usually as one of a number of figures bearing on some general point or other.

In any case, it is perhaps a shame that Bazin's distinction was lost beneath an avalanche of auteurist values. However interesting his distinction may be as a paradigm of directors, it is perhaps more interesting as a proposition about Rossellini himself. In the last analysis, Rossellini's work is probably not a good example of anything but itself; as lawyers say, hard cases make bad law. Rossellini and *what* other directors impose a distinctive *mise-en-scène* upon diverse materials as Rossellini does? Indeed, has any other director treated the range of materials that Rossellini has? What is needed is a Bazin book exploring Rossellini's *mise-en-scène* in relation to his materials, film-by-film. One dealing with Rossellini's work through 1956 or 1957 would do nicely. I would gladly trade both the Renoir book and the Welles book for it.

Besides Rossellini's *mise-en-scène*, Bazin has discussed in several places, and generally in greater detail, Rossellini's "narrative technique." The first instance is an eight-page section by that name in the 1948 essay "An Aesthetic of Reality: Cinematic Realism and the Italian School of the Liberation." (Though its section on "narrative technique" deals extensively with *Paisà*, it is sometimes unclear whether a point applies to that film specifically or to neorealism generally. He says in one passage: "In *Paisà* (and I repeat that I imply by this, in varying degrees, all Italian films) . . .".) Bazin proceeds by citing a passage from *Paisà* then commenting on it.

> A small group of Italian partisans and Allied soldiers have been given a supply of food by a family of fisher folk living in an isolated farmhouse in the heart of the marshlands of the Po delta. Having been handed a basket of eels, they take off. Some while later, a German patrol discovers this, and executes the inhabitants of the farm. 2. An American officer and a partisan are wandering at twilight in the marshes. There is a burst of gunfire in the distance. From a highly elliptical conversation we gather that the Germans have shot the fishermen. 3. The dead bodies of the men and women lie stretched out in front of the little farmhouse. In the twilight, a half-naked baby cries endlessly.
>
> Even with such a succinct description, this fragment of

> the story reveals enormous ellipses—or rather, great holes. A complex train of action is reduced to three or four brief fragments, in themselves already elliptical enough in comparison with the reality they are unfolding. . . . How did the Germans discover that the parents were guilty? How is it that the child is still alive? That is not the film's concern, and yet a whole train of connected events led to this particular outcome. In any case, the film maker does not ordinarily show us everything. That is impossible—but the things he selects and the things he leaves out tend to form a logical pattern by way of which the mind passes easily from cause to effect. The technique of Rossellini undoubtedly maintains an intelligible succession of events, but these do not mesh like a chain with the sprockets of a wheel. The mind has to leap from one event to the other as one leaps from stone to stone in crossing a river. . . . In the usual shooting script (according to a process resembling the classical novel form) the fact comes under the scrutiny of the camera, is divided up, analyzed, and put together again, undoubtedly without entirely losing its factual nature; but the latter, presumably, is enveloped in abstraction, as the clay of a brick is enveloped by the wall which is not as yet present but which will multiply its parallelipeds. For Rossellini, facts take on a meaning, but not like a tool whose function has predetermined its form.[14]

In the 1955 piece "In Defense of Rossellini," Bazin says:

> Neorealism contrasts with the realist aesthetics that preceded it, and in particular with naturalism and verism, in that its realism is not so much concerned with the choice of subject as with a particular way of regarding things. If you like, what is realist in *Paisà* is the Italian Resistance, but what is neorealist is Rossellini's direction—his presentation of the events, a presentation which is at once elliptic and synthetic.[15]

In "De Sica: *Metteur en Scène*" (1951) Bazin again speaks of Rossellini and ellipsis:

> But it is perhaps especially the structure of the narrative which is most radically turned upside down. It must now respect the actual duration of the event. The cuts that logic demands can only be, at best, descriptive. The assemblage of the film must never add anything to the existing reality. If it is part of the meaning of the film as with Rossellini, it is because the empty gaps, the white spaces, the parts of the event that we are not given, are themselves of a concrete nature: stones which are missing from the building. It is the same in life: we do not know everything that happens to others. Ellipsis in classical montage is an effect of style. In Rossellini's films it is a lacuna in reality, or rather in the knowledge we have of it, which is by its nature limited.[16]

Several points are clear from these passages. One is that Bazin makes a number of acute points about the narrative technique of Rossellini's films, from *Paisà* (1946) to *Voyage In Italy* (1954). These center around his refinements of the notion of ellipsis in regard to Rossellini. In so doing, Bazin suggests that ellipsis is fundamental to all film-making but that Rossellini is a special case—his work is more elliptical, more radically elliptical, or uses ellipsis in a different way than usual. Unfortunately Bazin does not elucidate the general case nor the relation of the special case to it. Indeed he does not say much about the case of Rossellini itself, though what he says is suggestive. Another point that emerges from these passages is that Bazin turns his analysis of ellipsis in cinema generally and in Rossellini in particular toward his realist notions at every point. Rather they seem to arise together and to be thoroughly intertwined, even if we sense at other times that they struggle with each other.

Bazin did not, however, invent the realist interpretation of cinematic ellipsis. Roger Leenhardt wrote about cinema for *Esprit* from 1934 and had a great influence on Bazin (see Andrew, pp. 30–37, especially). He wrote in 1936:

> And the proper role of the *mise-en-scène* of the production will be to give the impression that there is no *mise-en-scène.* Not a studied creation of "significance" by means of acting and decor, but a simple job of "rendering." Not a willful artistry of expression, but a technical effort at description. Precisely because of this primordial realism, it (the proper role of the *mise-en-scène*) is not in the cinematographic material or, if I may say so, in art, but only in connections, comparisons, and ellipses.[17]

Andrew comments:

> When Leenhardt claims that the primary figure of cinema is the ellipsis not the metaphor, he is insisting that cinema is not a symbol system substituting one set of signs for another (as classical film aesthetics believed), but an always partial view of something significant that tries to appear through it.[18]

Leenhardt and Bazin conjoin the notion of ellipsis with the notion of cinematic realism, advancing the proposition that ellipsis somehow works on reality itself in cinema rather than on cinematic discourse. This usage goes quite against usage of the term in rhetorical texts (ancient, mediaeval, modern) and in contemporary (post) structuralist texts as well. Perhaps it is the product of a French classical education and a period and school of thought predisposed to a realist ontology. In any case, once Bazin had identified cinema with reality itself—and had banished figures such as metaphor—he was perhaps committed to such a view.

Ellipsis is, of course, a geometric figure as well as a grammatical and rhetorical one. Its two

senses derive from a single Greek word, *elleipis*, which means "defective" or "to come short." The geometric ellipsis is a conic section in which the inclination of the cutting plane to the base "comes short of" the inclination of the side of the cone. The angle that it makes with the side of the cone is smaller than that of a circular section parallel to the base of the cone. The grammatical definition of ellipsis is "the omission of one or more words in a sentence, which would be needed to complete the grammatical construction or fully to express the sense." It is interesting that Anglo-American dictionaries and books defining literary terms nearly always give a linguistic or grammatical definition of ellipsis, not a rhetorical one; they address ellipsis in the sentence rather than in discourse. It was such an emphasis of linguistic study that led discourse analysts, especially in the early days, to speak of discourse as "a large sentence."

Seymour Chatman, a contemporary rhetorician and discourse analyst, devotes several pages to ellipsis in *Story and Discourse, Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film.* Chatman distinguishes discourse-time, the time it takes to peruse the discourse, from story-time, the duration of the purported events of the narrative. Ellipsis refers to a narrative discontinuity, between story and discourse. In ellipsis, the discourse halts, though time continues to pass in the story. Chatman distinguishes carefully between ellipsis and the "cut" between shots in the cinema. Ellipsis refers to a *narrative* discontinuity (between story and discourse); the cut is the *manifestation* of ellipsis as a process in a specific medium.

> A cut *may* convey ellipsis, but it may simply represent a shift in space, that is, connecting two actions that are absolutely or virtually continuous, as when shot A shows a man with his hand turning a doorknob and drawing the door toward him, and then, after the cut, a reverse shot B from out in the hall shows the same door opening, now inwards, toward the camera, and the man emerging. The discourse is no less continuous than the story in this instance; the cut is simply necessitated by the spatial problem of passing the camera through the wall. [(S)ometimes it can be difficult to tell whether a given cut signals a flashback, a flashforward, or simply an ellipsis followed by the next (spatially removed) event in the story.] And so with the other transitions of cinematic technology—the dissolve, the wipe, irising in and out, and so forth. These are all in the repertoire of cinematic manifestation, not parts of narrative discourse. In themselves they have no specific narrative meanings. Only the context can tell us whether a given dissolve means "several weeks later" or "several weeks earlier" or "meanwhile, in another part of town."[19]

Godard's films, like Rossellini's before him, often cover significant ellipses with a simple cut. In *Masculin Feminin* (1966), Paul is alive in the penultimate sequence, complaining to Madeline about sharing their bed with her friend. The last scene takes place in a police station. It is almost over before we realize that what the girls are reporting is Paul's death, an event not only elided but completely unprepared for and, seemingly, barely communicated to us at all. In *Le Mépris* (1963), another Paul sets out on his bicycle from the studio and arrives at Prokosch's villa after a straight cut. From the context it is clear, or it becomes clear, that the trip took at least thirty minutes—enough time for Camille and Prokosch to make love, were they so inclined.

It would be absurd to say that Paul's death in *Masculin Feminin* is "a lacuna in reality." It is a lacuna in the narration only. Indeed a series of such presentations by Godard in the sixties led viewers to say that such events were "arbitrary" or "unbelievable." Others said that such discursive events foregrounded the artificial, discursive nature of narrative itself, "denaturalized" it. Both sets of reactions took place within a set of conventional expectations concerning what film narratives were: Godard's selective, slight variations on convention were perceived as defeating, exposing, or failing of narrative, depending on one's perspective. But, as Chatman says, ellipsis is as old as *The Iliad*, though he also points out that ellipsis of a particularly broad and abrupt sort is characteristic of modern narratives. But this does not make them more or less or other than narratives.

Nor are the ellipses in Rossellini "lacunae in reality." Bazin's conjunction of ellipsis with realism is both mistaken and unuseful. But this does not mean that Bazin's suggestions concerning ellipsis in Rossellini must be rejected along with his realist reading. In this case it seems rather easy to dissociate them. Since Bazin has misapplied the notion of realism to ellipsis in the first place, that notion may be discarded without damage to the underlying rhetorical argument. Ellipsis was never understood to apply to "reality,"

only to discourse. Bazin's making a case for their conjunction is itself a *tour de force* of analytic reasoning or of casuistry, depending on how one views it.

The Rise to Power of Louis XIV (1966) inaugurates the third period of Rossellini's work, after the neorealist films and the films with Ingrid Bergman: the historical cycle that continued until his death in 1977. In fact Rossellini made historical films as early as *Viva L'Italia* (1960) and fiction films as late as "Illibatezza" in *ROGOPAG* (1962). Thus *The Age of Iron* (1964) begins that phase of his work devoted exclusively to historical subjects, strictly speaking, but *Louis XIV* remains its most widely seen instance. Rossellini's method of film-making changes in important ways in this last period, but close examination of *Louis XIV* and the other films reveals that Bazin's formula "synthetic and elliptical" applies to them too, even if the meaning of the phrase is thereby altered somewhat.

Louis XIV treats an historical subject in an elliptical manner; but its ellipses are no more "lacunae in reality" than are ellipses in a fiction film. There was indeed a Louis XIV, but we have no direct knowledge of him. For us Louis XIV is a creature of texts—original sources of multifarious kinds, countless biographies, textbook accounts, paintings, previous films, etc. The script for *Louis XIV*, based on a scenario by Phillipe Erlanger, is extremely elliptical in relation to Erlanger's long 1965 biography of Louis's entire life. *Louis XIV*, like the Rossellini films discussed by Bazin, is structured by ellipsis. Unlike them it shows how ellipsis may also be used to develop an historical interpretation. The film's interpretation may be judged purely on internal textual evidence, what Rossellini includes in relation to what he does not include; just as *Paisà* and *Voyage In Italy* may be judged this way. Or, unlike the earlier films, it may be judged with history book in hand—what it includes in relation to what it excludes.

I divide the film into twenty sequences, a scheme of segmentation that cannot be defended here. 1-10, concerned with the death of Mazarin and its immediate consequences, cover less than three days. 11-20, concerned with Louis's longer-range securing of his power, take place over twenty-one years (1661-1688). It follows that the ellipses of 1-10 are relatively short and those of 11-20 extremely long; but they are determined by a single principle. The film as a whole studies the seizure of power by Louis XIV—it is concerned with a process not a person. Its compositional strategy, which is also its strategy of ellipsis, is to include those events essential to this process and to exclude everything else. This principle of inclusion and exclusion is carried through rigorously. Contrary to what many critics have said, there are no scenes included for historical background or period flavor; none is included as historical description of the seventeenth century generally, materialist or otherwise. Once a scene is included—its boundaries determined exactly by its pertinence to the seizure process—it may be realized with a multi-layered complexity that Bazin called "synthesis."

1-10 begins with the treatment of Mazarin by the Parisian physicians. Colbert's discussion with Mazarin leads the latter to ask to see the king when he awakes. The king sees Mazarin and is alarmed; he affirms to his mother the need to make the state a reality. Mazarin dies, Louis orders deep mourning and convenes the Council for the next day. At the Council meeting he tells all ministers to report to him. Later he tells Colbert to consult him daily. 11-20 concern problems of consolidating Louis's power: excluding his mother from the Countil (11), the Fouquet affair (12-14), preparing styles of dress and Versailles (15-17), the operation of Louis's system of gathering the nobles at Versailles, making them dependent upon his wealth and favor (18-20).

There is not space here to present a full analysis of *Louis XIV*, let alone to review the large critical literature on it. Suffice it to say that some highly intelligent critics have gone awry on *Louis* by missing what Bazin grasped as Rossellini's "elliptical and synthetic" method. Paul Schrader said "The facts of the past (are) framed and organized in such a manner as to reveal *their*—not Rossellini's, not our—intrinisic truth."[20] James Roy MacBean said:

> Throughout the film each successive sequence has a twofold function in which information is presented to advance the chronological story-line and, at the same time, to analyze different aspects of the historical period. That the former is often less important than the latter is illustrated best, I

> think, by the doctor's examination of the ailing Mazarin. In terms of the story-line, this sequence is disproportionately long: all we really need to know is who Mazarin is . . . and not *how* he died but simply *that* he died . . . So the doctor's examination becomes Rossellini's examination of the state of man's scientific knowledge in seventeenth-century France. And what more telling index could there be of man's knowledge than his knowledge of his own *materiality*?[21]

MacBean is partly right, but there is no split between the two functions he specifies, at least not on the point he makes here. *When* Mazarin dies is a matter of fundamental importance to the seizure of power by Louis XIV or anyone else: hence a scene of his treatment by his physicians, hence seventeenth-century science. The point about bleeding may be not simply that it is "wrong," that it "hastens" Mazarin's death by comparison to the present; but also that it regulates the dying process. Mazarin will die, but not before he has heard Colbert's alarms about the court and not before he has alerted and counseled the king. The true calamity, for Louis, would be for Mazarin to die suddenly, so as to prevent planning and execution of his seizure of power.

Jose Luis Guarner says that "This *coup d'état* took place over a fairly long period in history . . . It has been compressed, by a considerable feat, into the length of a normal film."[22] Guarner's point raises a nice question. Let us say that there can be no compression (or condensation) without ellipsis—unless we merely do a speed-up like playing a 33 r.p.m. record at 78 r.p.m. or like showing a silent film at sound speed (or faster). But not every use of ellipsis results in compression. Rossellini does not compress Louis's life nor his career as monarch: vast areas of each are not touched on at all—Louis's foreign wars, court intrigues other than Fouquet's, etc. In relation to the *coup* itself, the film does not compress either—it gives as many *coup* events, and as much of each event, as it considers essential. In any case, it is not "a considerable feat"—it is merely a matter of knowing what you are interested in.

"Synthesis" may ultimately be a harder problem than ellipsis, involving as it does questions of verisimilitude, of "historical background," of the "deeper, structural historical factors," and many other problems that cannot be pursued here. Alas, Bazin too had less to say about "synthesis" than about "ellipsis" or, more precisely, about that synthesis that goes with and complements ellipsis. He had nothing at all to say about the "economic" problem of how the two factors work together, how a variation in the radicality of the ellipsis may affect the synthesis of elements in the scenes included.

> Genette shows that Proust's ellipses in the *Récherche* become increasingly abrupt, perhaps as compensation for the fact that the scenes between, though they cover shorter and shorter periods of story-time, are more and more detailed. The whole effect is of an ever-growing discontinuity between discourse-time and story-time.[23]

Once again we move from Rossellini toward Godard, via Bazin.

One aspect of the problem of "synthesis" is related to what Roland Barthes discusses in "The Realistic Effect";

> Does everything in a narration have a signifying value and if not, if there exists in the narrative syntagm some non-signifying elements, then, in the final analysis, what is, so to speak, the significance of this non-signification?[24]

Barthes concludes that such elements signify "reality" and that it is through the signification of such elements that reality is signified. "The pure and simple 'representation' of 'reality', the bare reporting of 'what is' (or 'was') appears thus as a kind of resistance to meaning . . . Flaubert's barometer, Michelet's small door, in the final analysis, say nothing other than 'we are reality'. It is the category of 'reality' and not its contingent contents that is signified."[25]

A propos *Louis XIV*, it seems likely that some details of costume, some procedures of eating, praying, dressing, some elements of decor and of gesture have little or nothing to do with the film's study of the seizure of power by Louis XIV as such. That is, they may be details that fit into no systems of meaning or paradigms of the work: they serve precisely to convey the reality effect. But we have seen that the doctor's activities relate directly to the seizure of power; so do the rituals of the king's rising, for they reveal how, when, and where the king receives the message "Mazarin wants to see you when you rise"; and affect whether he will receive it in time. Before one says which of the film's details signify systematically and which do not, one must make a careful study of the interaction of ellipsis and synthesis in the film. In short, we will not be able to answer Barthes's question until we answer Bazin's.

Our discussion of Bazin and Rossellini does

not, strictly speaking, prove anything. Its point has been to engage Bazin in a critical discussion that moves toward the present. It has attempted to use Bazin in posing and working on critical problems of the present—rather than lock him up in a completed and (spuriously) unified past, as his devotees tend to do.

If an effort is required to reconnect with Bazin, so that his writings are again suggestive rather than merely an example for textbooks, it is not only because of his devotees. It is due as much to the imposing schools of theory and textual analysis that have arisen between his time and ours. Not these contributions themselves but their effect of separating us from our critical and theoretical past has been quite unfortunate. For the film field to be cut off from Bazin is to be lobotomized in its adolescence. It is, moreover, unnecessary. One or two intellectual operations of a very simple sort are all that are needed to make Bazin available to any analyst today: a rejection of his theoretical realism and a sharp eye for the realist turns of his concrete discussions.

In *Elements of Semiology*, Barthes cites with approval Jakobson's point that "the analyst . . . is better equipped to speak about metaphor than about metonymy, because the metalanguage in which he must conduct his analysis is itself metaphorical, and consequently homogenous with the metaphor which is its object: and indeed there is an abundant literature on metaphor, but next to nothing on metonymy."[26] Is it possible that Bazin's writings may some day be reissued as *Studies in Cinematic Metonymy*? Perhaps not, but if the book of that name that does appear is excellent, it will have to come to terms with Bazin.

NOTES

1. Andrew, Dudley, *André Bazin* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. ix.
2. Truffaut, Francois, *The Films in My Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978), p. 9.
3. Andrew, *op. cit.*, p. x.
4. Truffaut, François, *The 400 Blows* (New York: Grove, 1969), p. 190.
5. Truffaut, François, *The Adventures of Antoine Doinel* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1971), pp. 8-9.
6. Quoted in Andrew, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 105.
8. *Film Quarterly*, Vol. XXV, No. 4 (Summer 1972), p. 26.
9. Bazin, André, *What Is Cinema? Vol. II*, translated by Hugh Gray, (Berkeley: California, 1971), at p. 61, p. 16, and p. 93. The *Europa* text is very slight and was not translated by Gray; see *Qu'est-ce que le cinéma*, Tome IV, pp. 97-99.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.
12. Godard, Jean-Luc, *Godard on Godard* (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 150.
13. Truffaut, *The Films in My Life*, *op. cit.*, pp. 275-6.
14. Bazin, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-36.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
16. *Ibid.*, pp. 65-66.
17. Andrew, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-32.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
19. Chatman, Seymour, *Story and Discourse, Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 71-72; 63.
20. Schrader, Paul, "The Rise of Louis XIV," in *Cinema*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring 1971), p. 4.
21. MacBean, James Roy, *Film and Revolution* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1975), pp. 214-5.
22. Guarner, Jose Luis, *Roberto Rossellini* (New York: Praeger, 1970), pp. 115-6.
23. Chatman, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
24. Barthes, Roland, "The Realistic Effect," translated by Gerald Mead, *Film Reader 3* (February 1978), p. 132.
25. *Ibid.*, pp. 133-134.
26. Barthes, Roland, *Elements of Semiology* translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967), pp. 60-61.

FILM BOOK SURVEY

This yearly round-up of film titles covers basically the period from Summer 1978 to Summer 1979. However, some earlier issues are included, mostly items which have only recently come to our attention.

TO THE DISTANT OBSERVER
Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema

By Noël Burch. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979. $19.50.

Published by the same organization as this magazine, Burch's book cannot be reviewed at length in these pages, but it seems to me an original, theoretically sophisticated, innovative, and readable treatment of Japanese cinema. Burch aims to show how Japanese directors escaped the standard "classic" style of shooting and editing dominant in the west; he rehabilitates the period 1896-1930 as not one of stagnation but of preparation for the "golden age" of 1930-1945. Copiously illustrated, often with the use of frame enlargements. —E.C.

not, strictly speaking, prove anything. Its point has been to engage Bazin in a critical discussion that moves toward the present. It has attempted to use Bazin in posing and working on critical problems of the present—rather than lock him up in a completed and (spuriously) unified past, as his devotees tend to do.

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26. Barthes, Roland, *Elements of Semiology* translated by Annette Lavers and Colin Smith (New York: Hill & Wang, 1967), pp. 60-61.

FILM BOOK SURVEY

This yearly round-up of film titles covers basically the period from Summer 1978 to Summer 1979. However, some earlier issues are included, mostly items which have only recently come to our attention.

TO THE DISTANT OBSERVER
Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema

By Noël Burch. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1979. $19.50.

Published by the same organization as this magazine, Burch's book cannot be reviewed at length in these pages, but it seems to me an original, theoretically sophisticated, innovative, and readable treatment of Japanese cinema. Burch aims to show how Japanese directors escaped the standard "classic" style of shooting and editing dominant in the west; he rehabilitates the period 1896-1930 as not one of stagnation but of preparation for the "golden age" of 1930-1945. Copiously illustrated, often with the use of frame enlargements. —E.C.

IT'S A HELL OF A LIFE But Not a Bad Living

By Edward Dmytryk. New York: Times Books, 1978. $10.95

The Hollywood blacklist became inevitable at the moment in 1947 when the film industry embraced Washington's offensive against radicals in government and the culture industry. Now it is passing from palpable history, a lived past contained within the present, to history of a very different sort, constituted through a reading of its artifacts. This seemingly inevitable loss is profound, for in passing from remembered experience to reconstituted image the blacklist loses its particularity. Its traces will be visible only in objects (books, films, clippings and so forth); its subjective devastation is becoming rapidly unknowable. Because of this, participant autobiographies can be important, even if inherently limited. Edward Dmytryk's autobiography may be one of the last, particularly from the Hollywood Ten.

Perhaps because, until recently, fear of reprisal has limited political frankness by private communists and ex-communists in Hollywood, the writings of the blacklisted have as a group tended to be fairly oblique cultural-political history. Dmytryk's book adds little if anything to what has already been written. As it stands, the recollections of Albert Maltz and Abraham Polonsky[1] seem the most candid and informative available memoirs of the period. With their material on Communist-left activity in the film industry they can, along with some scattered comments by John Howard Lawson and Adrian Scott[2] and the body of transcripts of government hearings,[3] provide a sense of continuity between the Old Left and more recent incarnations of the New. To us, this has been important for historical perspective on the battles for oppositional work within the culture industry. For whatever reasons, until recently, the general position of the blacklisted has been to downplay the significance and details of that struggle in Hollywood.

Yet the work of the Hollywood left, whatever its concrete social effects, too often reveals traces of that history—from *The Man Who Reclaimed His Head* (1934) to *Force of Evil* (1948) and *Thieves' Highway* (1949) to *The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars and Motor Kings* (1976) and *The China Syndrome* (1979), to pick just five—for trivialization to be tenable. Dmytryk argues in his book that *Crossfire* (1947), which he directed, was a "triumph for those of us who believed messages could be delivered by someone other than Western Union." Yet, in some ways, Dmytryk may not be the best critic of the films on which he worked. The structures of *Crossfire* that interest us[4]—the conflicting flashbacks and obfuscatory lighting, framing and dialogue—seem not to concern him any more than the anti-fascist polemic that can be read in the film's conjunction of its look with its plot. Perhaps that's why he recently maintained that "even at the height of Communist infiltration leftist politics didn't reach the screen. . . . Picture makers are in the entertainment business. And the dullest thing in the world is propaganda."[5] *Crossfire* was produced by Scott, like Dmytryk a Communist in at least the mid-1940s. John Paxton wrote the screenplay. Within a few months of the film's release, Scott and Dmytryk, and Maltz and Lawson, testified before the House Committee on Un-American Activities and, as "unfriendly" witnesses, became members of the Hollywood Ten.

Dmytryk was the only one of the Ten to recant, the only one to return to HCUA as a "friendly" witness. Still, this unique historical position, and three decades of uneven commercial success, have failed to produce a novel perspective. *It's a Hell of a Life* seems to have been hastily written, as indicated by confused anecdotes and small errors in spelling, names, and dates.[6] The book is rather nasty, contemptuous of almost everyone except Dmytryk's second wife, Jean Porter. Dmytryk at one point calls a homosexual student a "raving poof," and repeatedly uses phrases like "two-bit whore." His only reference to his first wife Madelyn's suicide[7] is to mention that he was thus "relieved of alimony." His climb-to-the-top-fall-off-climb-back-again narrative shows little perceptive understanding of the events in which he was a pivotal figure.

The three years Dmytryk worked with Scott and Paxton on *Murder, My Sweet* (1944), *Cornered* (1945), *So Well Remembered* (1947) and *Crossfire* seem generally to have been his most creative. Yet there are moments in earlier films he directed that should have been worth writing about. In *Captive Wild Woman* (1943), for example, Dmytryk—who worked as an editor before becoming a director—interlaced Clyde Beatty/animal action footage from *The Big Cage* (1933) with material shot ten years later on a shot-by-shot basis within sequences, constructing some quite intricate editing patterns. Part of *Behind the Rising Sun* (1943) shows Americans looking at a photograph of what are ostensibly invading Japanese soldiers distributing packages of food to Chinese in Manchuria. The film then reframes and animates the photo to disclose action previously unseen, action that shows the "food" to have been opium. The camera returns to the original frame, freezes the picture again, and shows the original viewers still looking at it (ostensibly unaware of the photo's distortion), as if for the sequence narrative time had stopped and the film directly addressed the viewer. Such irony in itself is hardly

innovative, but the specific critique of the frame is quite unusual, particularly for its time, and it anticipates the later films. Yet perhaps these were not Dmytryk's work, for he does not mention them.

Instead, he seems to argue, his major contribution to film-making was the "short-day" shooting schedule, an efficiency expert's dream for maximum yet basically painless exploitation of human and material resources. Much of the book is allocated to retelling stale anecdotes about his more famous co-workers, from Erich von Stroheim's on-set orgies to Montgomery Clift's drug and alcohol addiction. His accounts of his own triumphs with actors become formulaic.

Aside from in essence repeating what he told HCUA twenty-seven years ago, Dmytryk provides no incisive explanation of why he became a leftist in the first place. "I was anti-fascist on humanitarian rather than political grounds. . . . I decided the Communists were the only ones who cared. When I was approached (sometime in late 1944 or early 1945) I was ready to be had." Joining the CPUSA, he writes, reminded him of joining the Boy Scouts of America.

So, as he tells it, Dmytryk allowed himself to be packed off to prison with the others not because he believed as they did but because he didn't want to be branded a meretricious coward. Although he doesn't quite say it, it seems he turned against the others—and for himself—as soon as he began to believe Cold War anti-Communist stereotypes. Whatever his interest in doing so, it appears that he did indeed believe them without questioning their mystification. "I wanted out—not just out of jail, but out of my real imprisonment, my associations. I had known for at least a year that my comrades' protestations that they were fighting for 'freedom of thought and speech' was [*sic*] just more window dressing." *Just* "window dressing"? So simply? Similarly Dmytryk's persistent attacks on Maltz (apparently prompted by Maltz's attacks on Dmytryk's integrity over the years[8]) and Maltz's role in Communist literary politics seem to show no particular probing of the difficult complexities involved in intra-party debates over the politics of expressive autonomy. Maltz may have been wrong to retract under party pressure his quite reasonable call for critical analysis of the narrow "art is a weapon" line,[9] but readers are poorly served by any account of the controversy that ignores the range of historyical issues involved. At no point in the book does Dmytryk provide evidence that he tried to understand Communist politics after he first encountered them. He recently called himself a "socialist";[10] whatever his politics (and there are occasional slaps at "reactionaries" in the book) he seems not to investigate them very seriously. "My one real regret in renouncing the Communist party," he writes, "was losing our Paris friends. I've never been able to find any of those cafés again."

Herbert Biberman, another of the Ten, wrote about 15 years ago that Dmytryk told him in 1951 he broke with the others in order to go back to work.[11] Maltz wrote in 1951 that Dmytryk had explained his new position by declaring that it "was time for progressives to go underground for ahwile."[12] In his book, Dmytryk says his political enemies distorted his position. For him it came to this: "I knew that if it ever got down to a choice between the party and our traditional democratic structure I would fight the party to the bitter end." But was this ever a real choice? We should be able to expect a memoir from the Hollywood left to illuminate the contradictions of the experience it reconstructs, at least to address the vexing problem of what it might mean to do radical work within the culture industry and whether such work can be socially significant as more than example. Instead, Dmytryk has put together a sequence of anecdotes that frequently recalls his own early anti-fascist movies, except that here the villains are called Communists. For the most part, *It's a Hell of a Life* reveals contradictions only to an active analysis of the writing itself. What Dmytryk was taught by his encounter with repression, he says, was that "the real motto of a democracy," the one he would fight for to "the bitter end," is "Get what you can while you can and the devil take the hindmost."

CLAY STEINMAN and KEITH KELLY

NOTES

1. Barbara Zheutlin and David Talbot, *Creative Differences: Profiles of Hollywood Dissidents* (Boston: South End Press, 1978), pp. 3-99.
2. E.g., parts of John Howard Lawson, *Film in the Battle of Ideas* (New York: Masses and Mainstream, 1953); Lawson, "Hollywood On the Waterfront: Union Leaders are Gangsters, Workers are Helpless," *Hollywood Review* 1 (November-December 1954): 1, 3-4; Adrian Scott, "Blacklist: The Liberal's Straitjacket and Its Effect on Content," *Hollywood Review* 2 (September-October 1955): 1, 3-6.
3. A minority of these can be found in Eric Bentley, ed., *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from Hearings before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, 1938-1968* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).
4. See our "*Crossfire:* A Dialectical Attack," *Film Reader* 3 (1978): 106-127.
5. Vernon Scott (United Press International), "Propaganda can't reach the screen, filmmaker says," *Fort Lauderdale News,* March 2, 1979, p. 8S.
6. These are discussed in Lew Greenspan, "Dmytryk Book in Crossfire of Omitted Details," *Variety,* February 7, 1979, pp. 41, 44.
7. See. e.g., Albert Maltz, letter to the editor, *Hollywood Reporter,* May 29, 1951, reprinted in Bentley, pp. 400-

405. The letter was written in response to an article in which Dmytryk announced his political turn. Richard English, "What Makes a Hollywood Communist?" *The Saturday Evening Post*, May 19, 1951, pp. 30-31, 147-150.
8. Alvah Bessie, *Inquisition in Eden* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 265.
9. Maltz has recently indicated that his retraction was due more to his unwillingness to break openly with the CP at an acute moment of Cold War history than to changes in his thinking about the specific literary issues involved. Zheutlin and Talbot, pp. 32-36.
10. Vernon Scott, p. 8S.
11. Herbert Biberman, *Salt of the Earth: The Story of a Film* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1965), p. 17.
12. Bentley, p. 404.

GEORGE CUKOR

By Carlos Clarens. London: Secker & Warburg, 1976. (Cinema One series).

Despite George Cukor's extensive Hollywood career and his elevation by Andrew Sarris to "The Far Side of Paradise," there has been little significant critical work on the director. Two previous book-length studies have appeared. *On Cukor* by Gavin Lambert is made up of an extended interview, but the questions, pitched primarily at the level of intellectual gossip, are not particularly provocative. Cukor is led through a belittling of the "auteur" theory, and Lambert is content to conclude that Cukor's importance is that "he has never intruded on his subjects." *Cukor & Co.* by Gary Carey bases itself on a similar principle, but places the words in Cukor's mouth: "Cukor regards the text as inviolate." The examination of Cukor's films in this volume consists of Carey's conveying his own personal likes and dislikes among the films and lead performers.

Unfortunately, the new *Cukor* by Carlos Clarens also fails to come to grips with the importance and complexity of the films of the veteran director. Clarens slogs through Cukor's career film by film, democratically devoting a couple of paragraphs to each film—a history of the original source material, a plot summary, a citing of a few favorite moments from the film, and a critique of the acting. This format allows no room for extended analysis, which should be a major function of book-length studies. Cukor's films are "accomplished," "predictable," miscast," in the "wrong genre." *Dinner at Eight* has "some superior star turns." In *Born Yesterday* "Broderick Crawford overacts in distinctly filmic style, and William Holden's ageing pin-up boy with glasses is recognizable enough to overcome any objections to intellectual heroes in films." Too often idiosyncratic value judgments like these are allowed to stand in for serious film analysis.

Devoting a book to the subject of an individual director raises expectations of a serious authorship study. Yet to Clarens, "directorial style" is made up merely of "small personal obsessions." This attitude trivializes the director, and serves only to excuse the critic from all but the most perfunctory of commentaries. *Cukor* has little coherent thematic or narrative analysis of the films, and virtually no visual analysis. Actually, Clarens' auteurism can be seen as a veneer covering a basically anti-auteurist reductionism. In its extreme form, this sort of criticism does damage to the films it purports to study—set up as trivial, the films are now easy to dismiss sight unseen.

It also fails to do justice to Cukor's achievement. "Cukor was logically less attracted by the technical aspects of the motion picture than other, more expressive directors," Clarens asserts, "it was not until *A Star Is Born* in 1954 that Cukor allowed *mise en scéne* to come to the fore. Through the Thirties and Forties, apart from considerations of theme and style, Cukor would hardly be called an innovator." (p. 19) Setting aside the unsupported assumption that his subject is inexpressive, this statement asks us to ignore the facts themselves—and this is exactly what Clarens does. Surely camera movement and host length involve both a director's style and the technical part of film, and statistical evidence from Barry Salt's articles* on quantified elements of visual style show that in fact Cukor in the thirties was the leader of a trend towards longer shot length which became more generalized by the late forties. Cukor's *Holiday* (1938) is a pivotal film in the development in Hollywood of the long take, but as early as Cukor's second and third co-directed films *The Virtuous Sin* and *The Royal Family of Broadway* (both 1930) there is already evidence of an emphasis on unusually long takes and moving camera which provide fertile ground for the initiation of an examination of *mise en scéne*.

Furthermore, Clarens's argument denies the most useful precept of authorship criticism—that an analysis of *mise en scéne* can be a fundamental part of the analysis of theme and style. This can be illustrated with examples from two pre-*Star Is Born* Cukor films. In *The Virtuous Sin* Kay Francis must become a prostitute to secure the release of her imprisoned soldier-husband. We see her "entertaining" in a sleazy Eastern Front cabaret. Two Russian officers sit on either side of her, and in a long take they quarrel over who will have her that night, their argument eventually degenerating to a tug of war with Francis yanked back and forth between them. The authorship critic can connect this shot with another long take in a later Cukor film, *Pat and Mike* (1952), where two prospective lovers argue over their "property," Pat (Katherine Hepburn), in another tug of war with the woman in the center.

These two similar shots from films made 23 years

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apart sympathetically portray women trapped in subordinate roles, alienated by degrading situations where their function is that of a bartered commodity. Like the earlier film, the shot in *Pat and Mike* emphasizes the woman's lack of freedom and power. But here, more intriguingly, the men doing the tugging are Pat's central male "choices." Mike (Spencer Tracy) is Hepburn's gruff, lovable manager and mentor who treats her as well as he treats his horse, and Collier (William Ching) is Pat's stuffy, Ralph Bellamyesque fiancé who is also her superior at the school where she teaches. Up until this point the portrayal of Mike has been affectionate, amused by his quaint male chauvinism, while Collier has been seen as a posing fool, Manipulating Hepburn's talents to raise funds for the school. But here the symmetry in the shot of the tug of war causes the two men to be identified together, as a common problem for Pat. For the first time Mike's position of power over Pat is seen as analagous to that of the overbearing Collier, as both are grouped as dominating males, restricting in a very physical way the freedom of action of the "lady athlete."

The focus in both films on the role of women is clearly an appropriate subject for analysis by modern critical methods. In *The Virtuous Sin* Clarens sees simply "a quiet absence of style." *Pat and Mike* is dismissed as a film "so smooth and seamless that it becomes very difficult to analyze in print." But, as the above example illustrates, Cukor's films and shots can be analyzed in print, and his work does indeed display both visual and thematic situations that can be profitably examined using an authorship-based, cross-film comparison.

—JONATHAN KUNTZ

JAPANESE FILM DIRECTORS

By Audie Bock. Published for the Japan Society, New York, by Kodansha International Ltd., Tokyo, New York & San Francisco; $14.95.

A highly competitive and not particularly lucrative market for film books has begun to limit the scope and even the scholastic value of current books on film: the emphasis on "publishability" and "marketability" is affecting even that most esoteric area of film studies, the Japanese film, limiting approaches to a general and humanistic one directed toward as broad an audience as possible.

Bock emphasizes the one element recognized and understood by most film readers, the director. Whether or not one accepts the thesis that, as a group, Japanese directors have sole responsibility for the development of Japanese cinema, one will admit that an analysis structured around the directors is certainly the most direct and, on the whole, the most acceptable method of presenting Japanese cinema at this time. At least Bock has successfully faced the problems of discussing the chronological development of the Japanese film through directors, some known, some unknown to her anticipated audience, of bridging the gap from the "Holy Trinity" of Japanese film (Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, Ozu) to the less accessible "holy terrors" represented by Oshima and Shinoda, and of conveying their personalities and thematic intentions to an audience which, at best, has seen one or perhaps two films of any of the directors and probably not even that many.

The indisputable value of the book is its value as a teaching and reference tool: complete filmographies and film summaries will acquaint the neophyte with the extent and even with the quality of the films produced by the individual directors. Bock maintains the impartiality of a reference volume by avoiding, blandly, any position toward or any opinion about Japanese film *per se* in favor of an intelligent and sometimes chatty discussion of the directors based on an effective consolidation of Japanese and French critical references and her own personal observations. There is certainly more scholarly work being done in terms of structural analysis, etc., but there is little use in presenting this kind of material to the present mass reading audience: there is, simply, no use in talking about films no one has seen. The critical problem now is to attract a sizable following for Japanese film in order to create an audience for the scholarly work being done. If Bock is to be criticized for presenting us with a work less than distinguished, at least she can be credited with a correct estimate of her anticipated audience and of what it takes to attract it.

—SYBIL THORNTON

MANK
The Wit, World and Life of Herman J. Mankiewicz

By Richard Meryman. (New York: Morrow, 1978. $12.95)

Why isn't Herman Mankiewicz famous? He wrote *Citizen Kane*, after all, a fact which earned him an Oscar in 1941. Yet as Pauline Kael writes in *The Citizen Kane Book*, "He is all but ignored even in many accounts of *Citizen Kane*. By the 50's, his brother Joe had become the famous wit in Hollywood, and . . . Herman became a parenthesis in the listings for Joe."

Richard Meryman's light and anecdotal yet carefully researched book goes a long way toward correcting this. Besides being an excellent critical biography of an important movie figure, it lays to rest at last

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—JONATHAN KUNTZ

JAPANESE FILM DIRECTORS

By Audie Bock. Published for the Japan Society, New York, by Kodansha International Ltd., Tokyo, New York & San Francisco; $14.95.

A highly competitive and not particularly lucrative market for film books has begun to limit the scope and even the scholastic value of current books on film: the emphasis on "publishability" and "marketability" is affecting even that most esoteric area of film studies, the Japanese film, limiting approaches to a general and humanistic one directed toward as broad an audience as possible.

Bock emphasizes the one element recognized and understood by most film readers, the director. Whether or not one accepts the thesis that, as a group, Japanese directors have sole responsibility for the development of Japanese cinema, one will admit that an analysis structured around the directors is certainly the most direct and, on the whole, the most acceptable method of presenting Japanese cinema at this time. At least Bock has successfully faced the problems of discussing the chronological development of the Japanese film through directors, some known, some unknown to her anticipated audience, of bridging the gap from the "Holy Trinity" of Japanese film (Kurosawa, Mizoguchi, Ozu) to the less accessible "holy terrors" represented by Oshima and Shinoda, and of conveying their personalities and thematic intentions to an audience which, at best, has seen one or perhaps two films of any of the directors and probably not even that many.

The indisputable value of the book is its value as a teaching and reference tool: complete filmographies and film summaries will acquaint the neophyte with the extent and even with the quality of the films produced by the individual directors. Bock maintains the impartiality of a reference volume by avoiding, blandly, any position toward or any opinion about Japanese film *per se* in favor of an intelligent and sometimes chatty discussion of the directors based on an effective consolidation of Japanese and French critical references and her own personal observations. There is certainly more scholarly work being done in terms of structural analysis, etc., but there is little use in presenting this kind of material to the present mass reading audience: there is, simply, no use in talking about films no one has seen. The critical problem now is to attract a sizable following for Japanese film in order to create an audience for the scholarly work being done. If Bock is to be criticized for presenting us with a work less than distinguished, at least she can be credited with a correct estimate of her anticipated audience and of what it takes to attract it.

—SYBIL THORNTON

MANK
The Wit, World and Life of Herman J. Mankiewicz

By Richard Meryman. (New York: Morrow, 1978. $12.95)

Why isn't Herman Mankiewicz famous? He wrote *Citizen Kane*, after all, a fact which earned him an Oscar in 1941. Yet as Pauline Kael writes in *The Citizen Kane Book*, "He is all but ignored even in many accounts of *Citizen Kane*. By the 50's, his brother Joe had become the famous wit in Hollywood, and . . . Herman became a parenthesis in the listings for Joe."

Richard Meryman's light and anecdotal yet carefully researched book goes a long way toward correcting this. Besides being an excellent critical biography of an important movie figure, it lays to rest at last

the controversy as to who wrote what and when and does so while delivering a stimulating portrait of a fascinating and talented man who was a member of the famous Algonquin Round Table and author of several other fine films (Sam Wood's *Pride of the Yankees* with Gary Cooper, for instance). That he managed to achieve all this while engaging his father, and later his brother, in a lifelong battle to see who was the smartest, while determinedly drinking himself to death, scathing Hollywood fatcats with his biting wit (he once remarked upon seeing Orson Welles pass by, "There but for the grace of God goes God"), and while wishing fervently he was back in New York writing Broadway plays, is what provides the book's impetus. His wife Sara was known as "Poor Sara," as if it were her name, for putting up with all this and her portrait is every bit as rounded as her husband's.

—KEITH BURR

BLACK FILM AS GENRE

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Cripps defines the black film genre as "motion pictures made for theater distribution that have a black producer, director, and writer, or black performers; that speak to black audiences or, incidentally, to white audiences possessed of preternatural curiosity, attentiveness, or sensibility toward racial matters; and that emerge from self-conscious intentions, whether artistic or political, to illuminate the Afro-American experience." He then briefly discusses the history of the black film genre, with its recurrent themes and contributions of black film-makers. He traces the origins of the black cinema from the 1890's, when blacks were the subjects of a quest for the curious through darkest Africa, then follows its growth to the mid-1970's, when blacks became leaders of violent revenge in martial arts films. The black genre film of the past fifty years is given moral urgency by a tone of advocacy; it attempts to understand the whole of black life through a depiction of its parts; it acts as a ritual celebrating a myth; and it rests on heroic figures, either urban or pastoral, each reflecting a different focus of black experience.

Cripps then provides analyses of six black films and defines their position in the genre. *The Scar of Shame* is a social drama which expresses black economic aspirations, and *The St. Louis Blues* uses the black musical idiom to express dramatic conflict. *The Blood of Jesus* speaks with primitive conviction to black religious fundamentalism, *The Negro Soldier* is a strong advocate of black social goals, and *Nothing But a Man* describes heroic pastoralism through a visually symbolic narrative. The final example, *Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song*, is the most notorious of the recent "blaxpoitation" films, with its symbols of white oppression and black defeat.

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While Cripp's earlier book *Slow Fade to Black* serves merely as a detailed historical overview of blacks in the cinema, *Black Film as Genre* emerges as its keenly perceptive and highly analytical sequel. Cripps persuasively argues that a genre does indeed exist which establishes a black film identity, and he successfully employs a method of systematic criticism which carefully examines its growth, its expression, and its future.

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at the three titles under review offers some notion of the diversity of positions possible within this overall strategy.

Richard Combs's *Robert Aldrich*—the most modest of the trio in aspirations, as well as length (at 75 pages)—most closely resembles a Cinema One volume in its format and scope. Two longish essays, by Combs and Tom Milne, work their way chronologically through Aldrich's features, the former covering films between 1953 and 1961, the latter tracing the period from 1962 to the present; after this comes a recent interview with Aldrich, followed by a biofilmography which seems virtually exhaustive—listing Aldrich's features as assistant director as well as over a dozen unrealized projects, with additional interview material.

Although Combs appears to be trying to distance himself somewhat from an auteurist approach at the beginning of his essay, it would probably be correct to call the orientation of this book modified auteurism in the *Sight and Sound/ Monthly Film Bulletin* tradition. Duplicity, ambiguity, ambivalence and other forms of dialectical tension in Aldrich films are explored thematically and stylistically in both essays, yielding a criticism of appreciation which stops short at an obvious failure like *The Choirboys*—whose contradictions might point to an interesting social commentary, but not within this sort of context—yet remains alert to social nuance whenever the critics' aesthetic imaginations are engaged.

Considering the fact that each title under review is the first full-length book in English devoted to its subject, the challenge in each case is to open up an area for discussion without closing off fruitful alternative options. From this standpoint, Ian Christie's stimulating 124-page collection offers by far the broadest range of possibilities. It is a long-standing truism that Michael Powell remains the most neglected major figure in English cinema, and the enormous value of this multifaceted introduction is that it includes not only the best pioneering studies done on Powell in the Sixties—by Raymond Durgnat, Thomas Elsaesser, and Jean-Paul Török—but also groundbreaking new work in theory and research.

John Ellis's detailed analysis of *A Matter of Life and Death* ("Watching Death at Work") could serve as a model for how to apply the theoretical perspectives of *Screen* to a critical methodology without drowning readers in jargon or alienating them with elitist postures; and as a careful consideration of how narrative, realism, and sexuality are articulated in this film, the observations are both acute and suggestive. Significantly, these are tied to an analysis of the film's initial press reception, which complements the historical research done elsewhere in the book by the editor: a nearly 50-page "chronicle" (combining biofilmography and bibliography) of the careers of Powell and Emeric Pressburger, his principal collaborator, which leads off the collection; a study of the English press's scandalized response to *Peeping Tom*, in relation to the "illicit pleasure principle of cinema" that the film broaches; and a documented account of the diverse efforts made by Winston Churchill to suppress *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* in 1942-43—brought to light by Christie's own discovery of the relevant correspondence.

On the other side of the spectrum, Paul Willemen's 87-page *Ophuls* assigns itself the perverse task of accumulating diverse materials and then striving to give them as little use value as possible, apart from pursuing a parochial exercise in polemical spite. After noting in his Preface that any justification for his editorial choices is "'impossible' from a position within the institution," Willemen starts things rolling with a "Familmographic Romance"—a career chronicle promising a good deal more than Christie's while delivering considerably less—before proceeding to a set of documents and articles.

Much of the latter will undoubtedly be useful to Ophuls scholars: a *Cahiers du Cinéma* interview, two texts by Ophuls, recent studies by Frieda Grafe, new theoretical texts by Masao Yamaguchi and Willemen himself, and a reprint of Stephen Heath's "The Question Oshima" (which uses *Letter to an Unknown Woman* as a reference point) with a postscript added. What remains pointedly absent is any argument as to why anyone *should* be an Ophuls scholar in the first place. And more casual readers looking for information are likely to be frustrated: an early work as important as *La Signora di Tutti* gets no treatment beyond a short filmographical reference, while the early critical writing of Andrew Sarris on Ophuls isn't even acknowledged.

In their insistence on playing auteurist games

while simultaneously denouncing them as practiced by others, Willemen and Heath promote an unpleasantly self-serving and snobbish stance that dilutes and detracts from the value of their own insights. The idealist model conjured up by Heath for Oshima's *Empire of the Senses*, whereby scenes are organized in a pattern of repetition "with no *narrative* pattern of recall, advance, resolution," is obviously different in intent from the idealist models of "transcendental" auteurism, but remains idealist none the less; and Willemen's characterization of Ophuls's cinema as "the dramatization of repression" continually begs the question of why Ophuls should serve as a more interesting example of this process than any other commercial film-maker. In both cases, the limitations and tautologies of the reference points insure that the field of inquiry remains narrow, perpetuating the kind of alienating dogmatism that helps to give film theory a bad name.

—JONATHAN ROSENBAUM

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The recent pairing of the rubrics "feminist" and "ideological" criticism in film conferences and special issues of journals makes it possible to see these two BFI pamphlets complementing each other in productive ways. While Sylvia Harvey's monograph analyzes the development of Marxist film criticism in France and its efforts to elaborate a materialist theory of culture, E. Ann Kaplan's anthology provides a variety of textual analyses which examine the position, function, and image of women in one specific mode of cultural production, *film noir*. Harvey begins by asserting that the new theoretical rigor brought to film studies by structuralism/semiotics, theories of narrativity, and notions of filmic specificity has important implications for more general theories of ideology and culture. This new form of film criticism is crucial for understanding cinema's ideological function in a larger social context, and for theorizing how women are produced as a category within the social complex. The Kaplan anthology gives us practical illustration of this fact: *film noir* is rescued from its Procrustean bed of formalist/existentialist interpretations, and analysis is relocated on a plane of textual production in which the image of woman and notions of female sexuality are examined as the effects, work, and constructions of signifying and social practices.

In her introduction to the *May '68* monograph, Harvey notes that French theoretical developments in film studies have been appropriated by American and British criticism in a way which has cut them off from both the social theories and the political militancy which engendered them. The purpose of the monograph is to restore that materialist and social context to film criticism through "an active and productive reading of [the] past." The book is divided into three sections, with a useful appendix of translated documents (a chronology of events taken from *Cahiers du Cinéma*, position papers of the three leading journals in the debates on political cinema—*Cahiers*, *Cinéthique* and *Positif*, a polemic on what form a political film should take, an interview with a Communist director, and a seminal interview with Marcelin Pleynet in which he outlines his theory of the ideology of the cinematic apparatus).

Harvey discusses the impact on Marxist film criticism of the various strikes and struggles of May-June 1968, and assesses the effort made to bring class struggle into the cultural sphere. She traces the conflictual alliances of students, workers, and media, emphasizing the crucial difficulty: while some felt the crisis was only the beginning of a radical transformation of French society, others saw it strictly as an opportunity to bargain for better wages and working conditions. Harvey concludes that the revolution versus reform debate has important consequences for cultural production because these positions imply very different conceptions of film-making and film criticism.

From this Harvey goes on to discuss the Langlois Affair, the Estates General of the Cinema, the film groups and film journals. She is particularly adept at characterizing the political issues at stake and defining the various political perspectives on cultural production. In addition, her description of the theoretical positions of the main cinema journals provides concise discussions of issues ranging from *Cahiers'* ideological categories of films to *Tel Quel*'s political defense of

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modernist aesthetics.

The remaining two sections of the book form its theoretical core, providing excellent background documentation as well as controversial evaluation of the major debates on radical aesthetics. Section two begins the evaluation of materialist theories of culture with a discussion of post-revolutionary Russia, mass illiteracy and proletarian art, and the Formalist and Futurist movements. After careful explication of the lessons for constructing films that *Cahiers* and *Cinéthique* draw from their theoretical positions (both journals call for films which foreground cinematic language rather than 'showing' unproblematically a highly problematic social reality), Harvey launches into a 4-pronged attack on the modernist project. Modernism places too much emphasis on the means of representation to the exclusion of the social reality represented. Its reductive formal imperatives lead it to consider films as either essentially progressive or essentially reactionary. Its concentration on formal innovation in filmic texts neglects those texts' insertion into a particular historical context and social apparatus. And the emphasis on the productive 'work' of reading a text underestimates the importance of pleasure and entertainment.

Harvey's argument is skillful and persuasive; it centers on Brecht and Benjamin's thesis that the struggle of techniques should ultimately call into question the social relations of artistic production and consumption. Where her argument can be critiqued is in its failure to take into account psychoanalytic processes—the unconscious quotient in any production of pleasure. If the cinematic apparatus/institution organizes consumption as well as production, the component of desire (and hence the unconscious) must be considered. Harvey contrasts the notion of pleasure in the modernist-materialist cinema ("a function of transgressing cinematographic taboos") with the pleasure of Brecht's theater ("a function of learning about the world in order to change it"). But without an analysis of the *forms* of pleasure (especially in the cinematic viewing situation) the argument can only reach an impasse.

The final section of the monograph is an extremely useful and cogent account of theories of ideology in film studies (the 'base and superstructure' debate, 'the impression of reality,' and the notion of 'radical readings' of a text). The discussion is carefully researched and historically situated, drawing on the theoretical foundations of Marx, Engels, Gramsci, and Althusser. Harvey is particularly good at summarizing the advantages of a theory of ideology as operation, process, system of representation, while pointing out the idealist and non-Marxist pitfalls of more extreme versions of the complete autonomy theory. She calls for the necessity of understanding the *relationship* between different elements of the social formation, for further analysis on existing popular forms of expression, and for work on the ways in which cultural production can represent new needs and values.

From Harvey's comprehensive cultural overview, the Kaplan monograph on *Women in Film Noir* takes us to individual critical analyses of specific filmic texts. This book represents some of the most productive feminist criticism to date and provides a welcome advance from earlier sociological approaches lacking in theoretical rigor and methodology. For feminists, the important work of analyzing the devices, conventions, and codes of mainstream narrative cinema and the position and function of women within that, is indispensable to changing the oppressive structures of patriarchy. The articles in this volume contribute to that work.

The anthology moves from a general theoretical elaboration (problems in feminist criticism, a discussion of the generic conventions of *film noir*, an examination of the representation of women in *film noir*) to analyses of individual films. Each critic approaches the film text differently, resulting in a variety of perspectives on female sexuality as it is produced textually. Kaplan's useful introduction situates the essays within a context of the notion of discourse, emphasizing visual and narrative work in the production of the image of women. (Her analysis of *The Blue Gardenia* illustrates how the essential contradiction between the dominant male discourse and the repressed discourse of the woman in patriarchy is worked in the cinematic text.) Kaplan points out that the woman is central to the plot of the *film noir:* "defined by their sexuality, which is presented as desirable but dangerous, the women

function as the obstacle to the male quest." The woman is not safely placed in conventional female roles, but represents a disruptive force.

The first and last essays of the anthology, both by Christine Gledhill, provide a kind of critical frame for the monograph. In the first essay, Gledhill notes the broad change in feminist film criticism from the interpretation of immanent meaning to the interrogation of the production of meaning. This is demonstrated by her analysis of *Klute* in the last essay of the book, which examines in detail how the disturbances and inconsistencies of *film noir* are diminshed and harmonized, how the place of woman is relocated in less threatening terms, and how woman's image is reduced and brought under control so as to pose a much weaker threat to the male psyche than had been posed in *film noir.*

Sylvia Harvey discusses how the absence of normal family relations forms one of the distinctive patterns of *film noir.* She sees concrete economic changes forcing certain changes in the traditional organization of the family and suggests that the underlying sense of horror and uncertainty in *film noir* may be a partial response to this forcible assault on traditional family structures. Janey Place states that *film noir* is a male fantasy in which woman is defined by her sexuality. The male hero needs to overcome woman's sexual power in order not to be destroyed by it. ("The insistence on combining aggressiveness and sexuality in a consequently dangerous woman is the central obsession of *film noir.*") To illustrate this thesis she catalogues numerous images drawn from films of this type. Unfortunately, Place uses terms like "sensual" and "sexual" as if their meaning were unproblematic. It is important to ask how this "sexuality" is produced in these films and what purposes it serves, in order to begin to understand the ideological reciprocity of images of women.

The most intriguing analyses are those of Richard Dyer (*Gilda*) and Pam Cook (*Mildred Pierce*). Dyer says *film noir* is characterized by anxiety over the existence and definition of masculinity and normality. In his discussion of the star versus the film image (Rita Hayworth's Gilda is not the eternal unknowable of conventional *film noir*), Dyer begins to explore the construction of female sexuality in the text (and the social context). Cook sees *Mildred Pierce* as a drama of the (re-)institution of the patriarchal order. The transition to a post-war economy, impaired masculine population, the disintegration of the family, and the increased economic and sexual independence of women, all combined to threaten the Oedipal structure of patriarchy. Thus arises the need to reconstruct the structure which gives men and women their place in society. Using the model of J.J. Bachofen for the mythic structuration of the text, she demonstrates how *Mildred Pierce* moves toward the constitution of the "normal" heterosexual couple. Cook's analysis concentrates on the symbolic use of lighting and the organization of narrative structure.

The weakest argument is made for the psychoanalytic approach; the essay by Claire Johnston is the least substantiated and persuasive of her usually excellent work. Johnston is one of the most important contemporary feminist critics, whose use of psychoanalytically-informed semiotics has often produced brilliant analyses of patriarchal discourse. Here she does a reading of *Double Indemnity* in terms of the characters' signifying functions; she positions them in roles of the patriarchal drama of Oedipal accession to the symbolic order of culture. She concludes that once the challenge to the patriarchal order has been eliminated in the film "a sublimated homosexuality between the men can now be signified . . ." But the analysis relies too heavily on an unelaborated extra-textual schema.

The essays in the anthology represent some of the finest feminist film criticism to date. However, there is an omission which I think is important to note. None of the articles begin to deal with what perhaps presents the most promising methodology for feminists working in film—the study of enunciation in cinema. As Harvey notes in *May '68,* a theory of the relationship between the author, text and reader needs to be developed. Each of these elements should be thought in their historic and social specificity, and texts analyzed as a specific intersection of codes. It is this materialist process of reading that psychoanalytic thinking seeks to introduce into film studies. If cinema is seen as a production of fantasy which mobilizes primary processes, it is important to examine the processes of desire at work in the cinematic *viewing* situation itself.

This has important consequences for feminists, because the image of the woman is crucial to the activation of desire. A more comprehensive theory of textual production will have to take this into account. Nonetheless, *Women in Film Noir* makes an extremely important contribution to feminist analysis of cultural production, and should be welcomed as a major text of feminist criticism. —SANDY FLITTERMAN

MASTERING THE FILM AND OTHER ESSAYS

By Charles Thomas Samuels. Edited by Lawrence Graver. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977.

Mastering the Film, a posthumous collection of Samuels's essays on film, is adequate criticism at best (the word "adequate," as Pauline Kael notes, "always really meaning inadequate to one's hopes"). The first four chapters of the book were part of a projected "aesthetics of the narrative sound cinema" which was to include analyses of the work of 12 directors, on the following "ascending scale" of formal achievement: Reed, Renoir, Clair, Hitchcock, Fellini, De Sica, Olmi, Vigo, Truffaut, Antonioni, Bresson, Bergman. *(Olmi?!?)* If, subjectively speaking, it strikes you that some of these directors are at the wrong elevation on an "ascending scale"—say, Renoir down below or Bergman and Antonioni above—or that it looks rather more like a "descending scale," you'll find illumination in the chapters themselves, in for instance the chapter on Renoir, in which we discover that "Renoir's talent is essentially theatrical rather than cinematographic," "no other major film-maker is so uneven," *La Chienne* is a "pointless *crime passionel* story with a few good moments," etc. No—you're not reading John Simon (although a rather touching tribute to Samuels by Simon appears here as a foreword).

Only a critic with a dull eye could say that the quality of Renoir's films is due more to their "representations of life than to formal distinctiveness" or that *Boudu Saved from Drowning* "remains too nearly a play to require extensive treatment here." Or, about *La Dolce Vita,* in the Fellini chapter, that "Frankie Stout" lifting Anita Ekberg's love goddess above him is "an imitation of the propeller through which she descended to earth," when a rather more likely, and less strained analogy is to the "flying Christ" of the opening sequence. No wonder Samuels disparages the "symbolic" approach to directors like Fellini and Renoir when he's so clumsy with it himself.

If Samuels is aesthetically blundering with Fellini and *La Dolce Vita,* he's too tactful with Antonioni. He scrupulously sets out the images and the color scheme of *Blow-Up* (black, white, green and purple apparently loom large), then leaves interpretation up to the reader and goes on to chide other reviewers for *their* imperceptiveness—as if he had somehow clarified the film for everyone simply by describing it. He lazily casts Hitchcock in the over-familiar role of master audience manipulator. He fails to capture the excitement of the Carol Reed-directed *An Outcast of the Islands.* Doesn't Trevor Howard's electrifying performance as Willems make the film something more than a tidy study of a man's demoralization? The other characters don't define him; he defines them. If, as Samuels says, *Outcast* is "by far Reed's richest film" (and it probably is), isn't that because the execution of the Willems role by Howard and Reed overrides the quasi-allegorical conception of the script—as in *The Third Man* Orson Welles's Harry Lime overrides Grahame Greene's sometimes contrived personal loyalty-vs.-morality thematics? (Welles's too-long-delayed appearance is like a materialization of the zither music; his performance is on the same wavelength—mocking, grating, insinuating.) Howard makes even Willems's excruciating boredom in *Outcast* a passionate statement, a witty declaration of indomitability. It's an example of performance as meaning.

Samuels's blunt dismissal of American films is partly at least an overreaction to that apparently still terrifying spectre, the auteur theory. He begins a review of Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange:* "From the beginning, most American filmmakers have been *idiots-savants:* technically brilliant but unintelligent about life." Or, the American film dispatched in one sentence! If Samuels rather than Sarris had written *The American Cinema* it would have been a pamphlet. Silent films are just as handily dismissed. Silent filmmakers, notes Samuels, were "forced to be artificial . . . to stay on the surface. . . . Therefore, one need not study the earlier form . . . ". The silent cinema dispatched in one word—"therefore"! Accordingly, Samuels doesn't even bother to mention Keaton, Stiller, Lloyd, Murnau, etc. The arbitrary as aesthetic.

Generally, however, Samuels is less outrageous and more bearable. Adrift in the murkiness of Bresson's *Une Femme Douce,* he is yet intermittently cogent, though the quoted dialogue finally betrays him. ("We, too, form a couple, all based on the same model.") His chapter and notes on Reed constitute a rare overview of that director. (To his credit, Samuels did see as many of his subjects' films as possible.) And he's good on some individual films, such as *Grand Illusion* and *I Vitelloni*—in fact his best sustained stretch of writing is probably his chapter-opening description of

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"Adequate" will do. —DON WILLIS

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Beveridge, James. *John Grierson: Film Master.* New York: Macmillan, 1978. $17.95 cloth. Based on interviews done for the NFB film on Grierson, some of which did not appear even briefly (including Cavalcanti, of whom Harry Watt remarks, "I think documentary became *professional* because of Cavalcanti") and all of them fuller than the film could allow. Basil Wright is particularly interesting. —E.C.

Blake, Richard Aloysius. *The Lutheran Milieu of the Films of Ingmar Bergman.* New York: Arno, 1978. Summaries of Luther's theology, emphasizing concepts of Man, God, Reconciliation, Love, and Society are juxtaposed with plot resumés of appropriate Bergman titles. While likenesses abound, Blake does not hesitate from notions such as Bergman's aversion to Christ as a mediating agent between Man and God. Early allusions to Kafka and Existentialism seem cursory, and the Conclusion's distinctions between filmmaking and theology might usefully have preceded the body of the text. However, this 1972 dissertation is thorough, concise and rewarding. Its last film is *The Touch*; one wonders about Luther in seventies Bergman. —J.F.

Bogarde, Dirk. *Snakes and Ladders: A Memoir.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1979. $12.95. As one might expect, a polished, suave, intelligent story, full of smart, jittery dialogue, managing somehow to be confidential and detached at the same time. —E.C.

Bordwell, David and Kristin Thompson. *Film Art: An Introduction.* Menlo Park, Calif.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1979. n.p. An intelligent introductory text, with the great advantage of using numerous frame enlargements from good films. Probably the best text around for teaching students to "see" how films are actually constructed visually. —E.C.

Brakhage, Stan. *Film Biographies.* Berkeley, Ca.: Turtle Island (Netzahualcoyotl Historical Society, 2845 Buena Vista Way, Berkeley, CA 94708), 1977. $7.95 paper. This is a quite wonderfully extraordinary book: a series of lecture "impressions" of film-makers, done in a dramatically voiced, oral style, dramatizing what Brakhage sees as the critical turns of their creative and personal lives. The effect is rhapsodic, yet considered; oracular, yet setting forth many intriguing pieces of information; fascinating, in its focus on strangeness (the sound connotation of the name "Caligari," for example, or the many beards in Eisenstein's work, and what they probably signified to him). This is probably the best writing that Brakhage has ever done—mostly free, by the energy of its delivery, from the involuted archness he is prone to, and retaining only a tolerable dosage of puns and multiple-entendres. Whatever they might think of his films, these Brakhage lectures should be an inspiration to film teachers everywhere. —E.C.

Braudy, Leo and Morris Dickstein, eds. *Great Film Directors: A Critical Anthology.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. Paper, $7.50. A fat anthology on the main-line directors as seen by main-line critics. —E.C.

Brooker, Nancy J., ed. *John Schlesinger: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $14.00. Biographical and critical introduction, credits, synopses, bibliography.

Brosnan, John. *Future Tense.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978. Science fiction film history, comprehensive and updated as far as *Close Encounters.* Interesting information on curiosities such as *Aelita,* the 1924 version of Tolstoy which carries Bolshevism to Mars. Brosnan's text is more descriptive than critical. —J.F.

Brownlow, Kevin. *The War, the West, and the Wilderness.* New York: Knopf, 1979. $27.50. To be reviewed.

Brownstone, David M. and Irene M. Franck, eds. *Film Review Digest Annual 1977.* Millwood, NY: KTO Press, 1978. $35.00. Selected excerpts from review coverage in a variety of national publications and specialized film journals. —E.C.

Bruccoli, Matthew J., Ed. *The Blue Dahlia.* Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1979. $3.95 paper. Raymond Chandler's screenplay, with a memoir by John Houseman. Possibly apocryphal story about the role of alcohol in the quick concoction of the script. —E.C.

Butler, Ivan. *Horror in the Cinema.* (3rd edition, revised). Cranbury, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979. $15.00.

Canadian Centre for Films on Art, ed. *Films on Art.* New York: Watson-Guptill, 1977. The book updates *Films on Art,* 1952 and *Critical Guide,* 1956. Credits, summary and distribution sources (both US and Canada) are included. Thoroughly indexed by subject and by artist. —J.F.

Canemaker, John. *The Animated Raggedy Ann & Andy.* Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1977. $12.95.

Carbaga, Leslie. *The Fleischer Story.* New York: Nostalgia Press, 1976. $12.50.

Carr, Larry. *Four Fabulous Faces.* New York: Penguin, 1978. $12.95 paper. Large-format paperback made up almost entirely of hundreds of photos of Swanson, Garbo, Dietrich, and Crawford. —E.C.

Carringer, Robert I. and Barry Sabath, eds. *Ernst Lubitsch: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $20.00. Introductory biography

and critical survey, then credits and synopses; bibliography.

Carroll, Dr. James K., and Dr. Ronald E. Sherriffs. *TV Lighting Handbook.* Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab Books, 1977. $12.95. A catechism of studio lighting.

Cary, Diana Serra. *Hollywood's Children: An Inside Account of the Child Star Era.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979. $11.95.

Chandler, Charlotte, *Hello, I Must Be Going: Groucho and his Friends.* New York: Doubleday, 1978. $10.95. A quite fascinating anecdotal account of Groucho's life, including the difficult last days which Erin Fleming shared (with what seems to have been invigorating flamboyance). Many interview quotations and endless funny bits from Groucho. A sympathetic and sensitive account of a great man, with a kind of cosmic melancholy peeping around the edges, as it often seems to do with comedians. —E.C.

Clarkson, Marg. *Film Canadiana: The Canadian Film Institute Yearbook of Canadian Cinema: 1977–1978.* Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Film Institute, 1979. $16.95.

Clifford, Martin. *Microphones—How They Work and How To Use Them.* Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab Books, 1977. $8.95 cloth, $5.95 paper. Bad sound is a curse of many low-budget films, and sophisticated mike placement and use could greatly improve many sound tracks. This is a simple, practical handbook. —E.C.

Collie, Brenda Faye. *Back Steps.* Student Screenplay Series. Iowa City: Image & Idea, 1978. $3.95. (Box 1991, Iowa City 52240). Harlem life in the sixties.

Corder, E.M. *The Deer Hunter.* New York: Jove/Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. $1.75. A "novelized script," which begins unauspiciously: "The peaks of the Allegheny Mountains were invisible . . ." (the Alleghenies are small, rounded, comfortable mountains) and goes downhill from there. Who "E. M. Corder" is we are not told. The text has been prepared from a script, not the film itself, so it contains a few scenes dropped later, but since it is derived from the opaque script, it throws no light on the motivational obscurities of the film. —E.C.

Cowie, Peter, ed. *International Film Guide. 1979.* South Brunswick, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1979. $6.95. The newest issue of this essential reference work focuses on directors Shyam Benegal (India), Werner Herzog, Márta Mészáros (Hungary), Fons Rademakers (Netherlands), and Martin Scorsese. With the usual worldwide sweep of information on film-making everywhere, plus notes on archives, film schools, magazines, bookstores, festivals, film collecting, etc. —E.C.

Crawford, Christina. *Mommie Dearest.* New York: William Morrow and Co., 1978. $9.95. Crawford's adopted daughter tells a sordid tale of the behind-the-scenes emotional mess of her family; like other secrets of the great (real or imagined) it will soon be a screenplay, and presents an appalling story of wilfulness, resentment, and conflict to the death. —E.C.

Dick, Bernard F. Dick. *Anatomy of Film.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978. $10.00 cloth; $5.95 paper. Intelligent introductory text. —E.C.

Dwoskin, Stephen. *Film Is . . .* London: Peter Owen, 1975. An informal survey of independent film-making, *Film Is . . .* is weak on theoretical underpinning, and crowded with information. The latter ranges from personal anecdotes to descriptions of many films unknown in the United States. Dwoskin concentrates on New and post-new American Cinema. Emphasizing seventies European work, the book establishes a broader context within which Peter Gidal's *Structural Film Anthology* and Malcolm LeGrice's *Abstract Film and Beyond* may be viewed in fuller perspective. —J.F.

Dyer, Richard, ed. *Gays and Film.* London: British Film Institute. Distributed by New York Zoetrope, 1977. Three essays view homosexuality in terms of film pornography, stereotyping, protrayals of homosexuals, and subversive appeals to a gay sensibility. Contains a bibliography and a filmography of about 500 titles (films which contain representations of gay men and women). —J.F.

Eastman Kodak Company. *Cinematographer's Field Guide: Motion Picture Camera Films.* Rochester, NY: Kodak Company, 343 State Street. $3.95. A sturdy pocket-size guide.

Edera, Bruno and John Halas, eds. *Full Length Animated Feature Films.* New York: Hastings House, 1977. $35.00.

Edmonds, Robert. *Scriptwriting for the Audio-Visual Media.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1978. $8.95.

Ellis, Jack C., Charles Derry, and Sharon Kern. *The Film Book Bibliography 1940–1975.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. $28.50. A classified and cross-indexed bibliography.

Erens, Patricia. *Akira Kurosawa: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979. $15.00. Biographical and critical section, credits and synopses, then annotated bibliographical listings.

Erens, Patricia. *The Films of Shirley Maclaine.* Cran-

bury, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978. $17.50. There is the film scholar Erens and the popular Erens, and this book, by the latter, is a routine account of MacLaines's life and times, plus rather summary accounts of film plots in which she figured. —E.C.

Everson, William K. *American Silent Film.* New York: Oxford, 1978. $17.50. To be reviewed.

Fadiman, Regina K. *Faulkner's Intruder In The Dust: Novel Into Film.* Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1978. No price given. A solidly researched study of the adaptation process, together with the script. —E.C.

Feineman, Neil. *Nicolas Roeg.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $9.95. Cogent explications of some of the most difficult films of recent times. —E.C.

Feldman, Seth, and Joyce Nelson, eds. *Canadian Film Reader.* Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1977. $6.95. A useful sourcebook of wide-ranging and perceptive essays on all aspects of film-making in Canada. —E.C.

Finch, Christopher. *The Art of Walt Disney: From Mickey Mouse to the Magic Kingdoms.* New York: Abrams, 1975. $7.95.

Finch, John R. and Paul A. Elby. *Close-Ups from the Jorifin Collection.* Cranbury, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979. $25.00. Posed portraits of 484 stars, plus ten-line biographies. —E.C.

Fontaine, Joan. *No Bed of Roses: An Autobiography.* New York: William Morrow and Co., 1978. $9.95.

Foster, Harold M. *The New Literacy: The Language of Film and Television.* National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Road, Urbana, Ill. 61801, $2.75. A pamphlet, unfortunately very unsophisticated in analyzing film style; inferior to most available elementary film textbooks. —E.C.

French, Brandon. *On the Verge of Revolt.* New York: Frederick Ungar, 1978. French's study operates from the premise that selected fifties American films may be seen to express the dissatisfactions and frustrations of women, dispositions soon to erupt. Drawing on plot, theme and characterization (in the manner of Wolfenstein and Leites, Deming, and Michael Wood), the book consists of twelve essays, chronologically examining by way of specific texts (e.g., *Sunset Boulevard. The Country Girl. Picnic*) such issues as romance, adultery, widowhood, and ambition. Earlier fifties films suggest conformist phases; later titles hint at more radical transitions. In the author's mind, all embody liberal, which is to say, deceptively personalized, solutions to social issues. A perceptive, debatable study. —J.F.

Furniss, Harry. *Our Lady Cinema: How and Why I Went Into the Photo-Play World and What I Found There.* London and New York: Garland, 1978. Furniss was an early film writer and actor, and this volume, first published in 1914, consists of humorous essays originally written in England for *The Bioscope.* It is an unserious collection that colorfully elaborates the infant ethos of both film-making and film viewing. Furniss saw Muybridge's Zoetrope exhibition at The Savage Club in London in 1889. Marvelous line drawings by the author. —J.F.

Geist, Kenneth L. *Pictures Will Talk: The Life and Films of Joseph L. Mankiewicz.* New York: Scribner's, 1978. Based on this admirably researched book, Mankiewicz yet fails to enter the Pantheon, an issue of some apparent importance both to author and subject. However, Geist's study, supported by many interviews, provides a feast of Hollywood gossip, anecdotes and producers' wiles. Mankiewicz faces down DeMille in a shootout at the Screen Directors Guild. Nick Schenck thinks firmament means either a laxative or a fixative for false teeth. —J.F.

Gordon, Roger L., ed. *The Art of Multi-Image.* Association for Multi-Image, 1978. No price given. Mainly about advanced types of slide-show.

Gregor, Ulrich. *Ab 1960: Geschichte des Films.* Munich: C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1978. No price given.

Halas, John. *Visual Scripting.* New York: Hastings House, 1976. $30.00.

_____, and David Rider. *The Great Movie Cartoon Parade.* New York: Crown, 1976. $9.95.

Halliwell, Leslie. *Halliwell's Movie Quiz.* New York: Penguin, 1978. $2.95. Some easy, some hard, some impossible. —E.C.

Hammond, Paul, ed. *The Shadow and Its Shadow.* London: British Film Institute, 1978. Distributed by New York Zoetrope. An excellent collection of primary and critical source materials on surrealist writings about film. Hammond's selections emphasize French surrealism's twenties disdain toward Gance-Dulac-Cocteau "artiness" and the continuity of this charge among figures as unlike as Nelly Kaplan and Joseph Cornell. As surrealism's first generation acclaimed Pearl White, Fantômas and Stroheim, sound era critiques considered *King Kong. The Big Sleep. Laura. Gun Crazy* and (with delightful irreverence) *Shanghai Gesture.* Many selections derive from *L'Age du cinéma.* their translations much appreciated. The book contains a rather cursory filmography and no index. —J.F.

Handling, Piers. *The Films of Don Shebib.* Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1978. $5.95. Shebib (*Goin'*

Down the Road) works a distinctively Anglo-Canadian vein of working-class men's friendships. —E.C.

Harpole, Charles Henry. *Gradients of Depth in the Cinema Image.* New York: Arno Press, 1978. Dramatic employment of depth of field his subject, Harpole factually substantiates Comolli's somewhat vulnerable arguments; use of depth was not necessarily limited by extant terminology. Films of 1895–1913 are shown to stress depth through perspective and movement. The next few years evidence increased self-conscious staging of two-plane compositions. (It is not clear how the example cited from *The Londale Operator* supports this thesis).

Employment of depth in German expressionist and Soviet film is contrasted with its usage by contemporary figures such as Tourneur, Dreyer and Murnau. The deep space often seized upon in *Kane* is identified throughout the preceding sound decade. The study breaks essentially at 1941; more recent work is cursorily treated. Harpole's is an exemplary piece of scholarship. —.J.F.

Harryhausen, Ray. *Film Fantasy Scrapbook* (2nd ed., revised). Cranbury, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979. $17.50 cloth, $7.95 paper.

Haydock, Ron. *Deerstalker! Holmes and Watson on Screen.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, $12.50.

Hayward, Stan. *Scriptwriting for Animation.* New York: Hastings House, 1978. $7.95.

Hecquet, Marie-Claude and David McNicoll. *A Guide to Film and Television Courses in Canada 1978–79.* Ottawa, Canada: Canadian Film Institute, 1979. $6.95.

Herdeg, Walter, ed. *Film and TV Graphics 2: An International Survey of the Art of Film Animation.* Zürich: Graphis Press, 1976. $28.00.

Hickman, Gail Morgan. *The Films of George Pal.* Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1977. $17.50.

Higashi, Sumiko. *Virgins, Vamps, and Flappers: The American Silent Movie Heroine.* Montreal: Eden Press, 1979. $15.00. Based on empirical study of recurring roles and motifs in numerous films, this discussion of female screen types of the silent cinema attempts to examine how the changes in the popular image of the woman reflect larger social, economic and cultural developments. Unfortunately, the study is almost entirely descriptive (plots, character types, careers) and reaches fairly predictable conclusions: as the Jazz Age progressed, the Victorian heroine became increasingly outmoded and concepts of morality based on woman's purity and innocence changed. But the "New Woman" of the Jazz Age failed to provide women with alternative models of non-traditional life styles. From the sheer amount of material Higashi has covered (close to 200 films viewed, extensive bibliography, clipping files, scrapbooks, and interviews), the book is a storehouse of information. But the most interesting part of this 226-page book is its 4-page conclusion. During the teens and twenties the film image of woman fell into several categories: the Victorian archetypes of sentimental, ethereal heroine (both victim and redeemer) and the vamp (the sexually devouring temptress), and the Jazz Age heroines (working girl, "New Woman," socialite)—whose sexual nature was redefined but whose domestic role remained unquestioned. Higashi concludes, the "essence of the changing screen image of the woman . . . was her maturation into a sexual being"; she attributes this to the development of the consumption ethic which linked a liberated concept of female sexuality with a hedonistic life style based on the acquisition of material goods. But no *analysis*, either of notions of "sexuality" or of the films themselves from a cinematic standpoint, appears in this sociological study. What still remains to be done is that work which moves away from simple description to an analysis of the complex mechanisms which produced those images. —SANDY FLITTERMAN

Hinton, David E. *The Films of Leni Riefenstahl.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1978. $7.00. Mainly based on Riefenstahl's own accounts, and simply ignores certain crucial information (such as the Nazi sources of finance for *Olympia*) but includes a careful structural analysis of *Triumph of the Will*, including its *longueurs*. Adds some material to what is generally known about Riefenstahl, but is not strong on dealing with the Nazi period historically. —E.C.

Hintz, H.F. *Horses in the Movies.* Cranbury, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979. $15.00. As Sam Goldwyn said to Lindsay Anderson (giving advice about making *Sequence* covers more attractive): "Who cares about horses?" Well, here's your book, horse fans. (By a professor of animal nutrition). —E.C.

Hirsch, Foster. *The Hollywood Epic.* Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978. $15.00. An entertaining but disorganized ramble through a miscellany of titles, ending with "High Adventures, Swashbucklers, Other Non-Epics." —E.C.

Holloway, Ronald. *Beyond the Image.* Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1977. Film history embodies three periods: (1) placing man within the secure embrace of the universe; (2) use of propaganda and technology to manipulate public thought; (3) the fostering of theological dialogue. Much of the historical survey predictably recapitulates common information. Later, increased attention centers on Bergman, Dreyer, Bresson, and Buñuel. —J.F.

Holman. L. Bruce. *Puppet Animation in the Cinema: History and Technique.* Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes 1975. $8.95.

Horkheimer, Mary Foley and John C. Diffor, eds. *Educators Guide to Free Films, 1978–79.* Randolph, Wisconsin: Educators Progress Service, Inc. (53956), 1978. No price given. A guide to film sponsored by corporations and government agencies—ranging from usefully informative films to blatant propaganda. —E.C.

Horvath, Joan. *Filmmaking for Beginners.* New York: Cornerstone Library, 1977 (reprinted). $2.95. Aimed at children.

Hurley, Neil P. *The Reel Revolution: a Film Primer on Liberation.* Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1978. Committed to a "Christian liberation theology," Hurley posits a judgmental, humanist strain that underlies much popular film. While drawing from a large body of European and American output, the book gives special emphasis to Latin American cinema, and is notable for Hurley's familiarity with this material. Discussion centers about topics like charisma and revolutionary leadership, consciousness-raising, exploitation, and violence. Throughout, film's influential power is considered reinforced by illusion; Godard citations, for example, end in 1969 at *Weekend.* A confrontation with seventies film study could have highlighted the author's position toward more recent views of film and ideology. —J.F.

Kass, Judith, M. *Robert Altman: American Innovator.* New York: Popular Library, 1978. A good, popular director study, more informational than interpretive. Kass concludes with *A Wedding,* then in progress, and does not flinch from *Bodyguard* (Altman co-wrote the script in 1948), *The Delinquents* (1957), *The James Dean Story* (1957), and *Countdown* (1968). Contains a filmography. —J.F.

Katz, John Stuart, ed. *Autobiography: Film/ Video/ Photography.* Ontario: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1978. No price given. An attractive and valuable resource text combining critical articles and extensive bibliographies on over 60 artists who have made films that are in one way or another autobiographical. —E.C.

Klingender, F.H. and Stuart Legg. *Money Behind the Screen.* New York: Arno, 1978. A reprint of the 1937 report originally prepared on behalf of the London Film Council. The book underscores Hollywood smothering British markets even after the 1927 Quota Act; it describes British exhibition, production-financing, and organization, including corporate ownerships with their linkages: J. Arthur Rank, for example, and several milling concerns. Of special interest is an appendix that traces the industrial film history of US banking interests closing around sound equipment: Morgan and AT&T; Rockelfeller, Chase and RCA Photophone. —J.F.

Kobal, John. *Rita Hayworth: The Time, the Place, and the Woman.* New York: Norton, 1978. $12.95. A touching tale of the ultimately inscrutable dancer who never really enjoyed being sold as a sexpot by Harry Cohn, married to Orson Welles or Aly Khan, or indeed perhaps anything except dancing, at which she was very good indeed. Includes the famous *Life* photograph and an intriguing account of the confused production of *Gilda.* —E.C.

Kramer, Steven Philip and James Michael Welch. *Abel Gance.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $9.50. Gance was, as the authors put it, "an extreme idealist," and a master of epic. He envisioned great things for theater, for cinema, and for himself; and the evidence of his *Napoleon,* at any rate, saves him from charges of grandiloquence: he possessed the cinematic powers to bring his overwhelmingly romantic notions to dramatic life. This astute and thoroughly researched study traces the origins of Gance's ideas in the philosophical currents of his time, examines each of the films in detail, and provides an account of Gance's chaotic life; it concludes with a lively interview done when Gance was 84. ("Beyond a certain point genius becomes insupportable. I'm not speaking of my own; I'm speaking of Bonaparte's . . .") This book puts Gance into a proper perspective and will call overdue attention to his films. —E.C.

Kriedl, John Francis. *Alain Resnais.* Boston: Twayne, 1978. The author considers Resnais' features, from *Hiroshima* to *Providence,* in terms of three themes: 1. The impossibility of documenting what has passed and what is passing (Hiroshima, Algeria, Stavisky); 2. The presence of the absent (the old Boulogne); 3. The return of the repressed (compulsively recurrent incidents in *Marienbad*). A good introduction to Resnais, the study is enhanced with various interviews dating from 1959 and by excellent material on comic strips and their fascination for the director. A list of unrealized projects is tantalizing. How about *Red Ryder,* or "The Inmates" (devised with Stan Lee), or "Arkham" (based on the world of H.P. Lovecraft)? —J.F.

Kybett, Harry. *The Complete Handbook of Videocassette Recorders.* Blue Ridge Summit, Pa.: Tab Books, 1977. $9.95 cloth, $5.95 paper. A technical guide to operation and maintenance.

Lesley, Cole. *The Life of Noël Coward.* New York: Penguin, 1978. $3.95. A charmingly chatty chronicle of a well lived life; originally published as *Remembered Laughter.* —E.C.

Levitan, Eli. *Electronic Imaging Techniques.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1977. $17.95.

Lindemann, Bernhard. *Experimentalfim Als Metafilm.* Nildesheim, Germany and New York: George Olms Verlag, 1977. With some trepidation, Lindemann investigates the applicability of semiotic theory to ten films (abstract? *cinema pûr?* structuralist?) including *Un Chien Andalou, Entr'acte, Ballet Mecanique, Back and Forth, Corridor, Zorns Lemma* and *Relativity.* His frames of reference include Metz, Eco, and Bettetini. Explications of the films are accompanied by a generour number of frame enlargements. —J.F.

Loos, Anita. *San Francisco.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979. $10.00 cloth, $4.95 paper. Gable, MacDonald, Tracy, The Works as Loos happily quotes a TV listing in her afterword. An original script (uncommon in thirties Hollywood) was sponsored into production by Thalberg as one of his final ventures. It grew from the nostalgia of Loos and her co-writer Robert Hopkins for the old home town. —J.F.

_____. *The Talmadge Girls: A Memoir.* New York: Viking, 1978. Scriptwriter for Talmadge pictures, friend and confidante of their mother, Anita Loos has designed a book in which the family alternately operate as central figures and as background to the Hollywood twenties. Some gossip bears tracking down, *e.g.,* Joe Schenck volunteering prison for tax evasion to protect a partner. A Constance Talmadge script, *A Virtuous Vamp,* is included. It sounds pretty silly, but Loos writes prose like an angel. —J.F.

Lovell, Alan. *Anarchist Cinema.* New York: Gordon Press, 1975. $5.00. Lovell's subject pleads for the extended treatment he might so evidently provide. In truth a 39-page monograph, the book describes selected films by the anarchist trinity. It is standard toward Vigo, excellent with respect to Franju's shorts and *La Tête contre les Murs,* and choosey toward Buñuel productions. Omissions include *Un Chien Andalou, Subida al Cielo, The Exterminating Angel, Diary of a Chambermaid, Simon of the Desert, Belle de Jour and Tristana.* Lovell is especially good on *Los Olvidados* and *The Young One* (which he likes). —J.F.

Lynch, F. Dennis. *Clozentropy: A Technique For Studying Audience Response to Films.* New York: Arno Press, 1978. A 1972 dissertation. Lynch designed a testing instrument to apply measures of hermeneutic expectation to viewers with respect to time-differentiated narrative continuities (action continues; different action, same time; different action, different time) and camera angle (same size; tighter; looser). "Naive" and "sophisticated" audiences were presented with two straightforward films, one more imaginatively designed than the other. At designated moments, subjects articulated their anticipations about the next shot. Results validated the test's capacity to detect differences in entropy patterns, relations between classes of subjects and classes of films, and "plot/shot" levels. —J.F.

Lyons, Timothy J. *Charles Chaplin: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979. $30.00. A credits-and-synopses section, then briefly annotated bibliographical listings.

Madsen, Axel. *John Huston.* New York: Doubleday, 1979. $10.00. A sloppy cut-and-paste job. —E.C.

Malone, Michael. *Heroes of Eros: Male Sexuality in the Movies.* New York: Dutton, 1979. $9.95 paper. A rather witty and androgynously sophisticated study of the mythological sides of male star sex appeal. —E.C.

Maltin. Leonard. *The Art of the Cinematographer: A Survey and Interviews with Five Masters.* New York: Dover, 1979. $5.00. reissue of the 1971 work, with updated filmographies. Interviews with Arthur Miller, Hal Mohr, Hal Rosson, Lucien Ballard, and Conrad Hall. —E.C.

Maltin, Leonard, and Richard W. Bann. *Our Gang: The Life and Times of the Little Rascals.* New York: Crown Publishers, 1979. $5.95. Credits and commentary on 221 films; with some remarkable photos of what they look like now. —E.C.

Manchel, Frank. *Gangsters on the Screen.* New York and London: Franklin Watts, 1978. Layout, type size, and concise, simple language give Manchel's book the look of a juvenile, but appearances are somewhat deceptive. For its size, the book is well researched, mingling less-known titles and descriptions with the obvious ones, just as the ample illustrations are more and less familiar. —J.F.

Maremaa, Thomas. *Studio: A Novel.* New York: William Morrow and Company, 1978. $8.95.

Marill, Alvin H. *Robert Mitchum on the Screen.* Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978. $19.95. The perplexing case of an arguably great actor who has worked in only one first-class film, *Night of the Hunter,* and yet is a kind of folk hero. Brief biographical sketch, credits, plot summaries. —E.C.

Mast, Gerald and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. This useful classroom anthology of film criticism and theory has been improved by the addition of over 15 new essays. The move from Shakespeare (deleted) to semiology (a whole section has been added) reflects the current shift in film studies away from literary models to methodologies

more specifically related to film. Unfortunately, the articles on Metz's semiology deal only with his linguistic work of 10 years ago and make criticisms on that basis. The anthology fails to include any of the important recent work on the metapsychology of the spectator. But the new section on Film and Society (which includes *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s landmark textual analysis of *Young Mister Lincoln* and Brian Henderson's seminal article on camera style) is an important addition to the volume. —SANDY FLITTERMAN

Matorin, Bob. *Taping It Together: A Video Manual for Community Groups (Urban Planning Aid).* Boston: The Media Project (120 Boylston Street, Boston, Mass. 02116), 1978. $1.25.

Mayer, Michael F. *The Film Industries.* New York: Hastings House, 1978. $11.50 cloth; $5.95 paper. A second edition, revised and enlarged, of this practical guide to business and legal problems in film production, distribution, and exhibition, by a theatrical lawyer with broad interests. —E.C.

McCoy, Horace. *I Should Have Stayed Home.* New York and London: Garland, 1978. This time (1938), McCoy's boy and girl are good looking movie-struck aspirants, down-and-out in Hollywood, dreaming of stardom. Studio actors dare a strike and win concessions, but the system outwits, corrupts or defeats all the good guys. A rich, aging, masochistic nymphomaniac calls everyone "dear boy." A starlet swims nude in a Beverly Hills pool. "You could see everything she had, even the place where the Indian shot her." —J.F.

McKee, Gerald. *Film Collecting.* Cranbury, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1979. $12.00. The historical and technical intricacies of 28mm, 9.5mm, collectors' organizations, etc.; mostly British perspective.

Media Review Digest, 1978. Ann Arbor, Mich.: Pierian Press, 1979. $120.00. Access to films, filmstrips, records, tapes, videotapes, etc.

Mellen, Joan, ed. *The World of Luis Buñuel: Essays in Criticism.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. $5.95 paper. This is an excellent Buñuel anthology. While many of the selections are familiar and accessible (Durgnat, Aranda, Kyrou, Henry Miller), others are most welcome, particularly in translation (Bazin, selections from *Cine Cubano* and *Positif*). —J.F.

Michalczyk, John J. *Andre Malraux's* Espoir: *the Propaganda/Art Film and the Spanish Civil War.* University, Miss.: Romance Monographs, 1977. Malraux's film is viewed in the contexts of its production origins, relation to the novel, the influences of silent Russian film and theory (Eisenstein in particular), Milhaud's music, and the movie's 40-year history of public and critical responses. Michalczyk moves comfortably through each domain, and the monograph is exemplary for its scholarship. The "cinematic" aspects of Malraux's novel, not always translated to the screen, prove especially interesting. (*Espoir* is only available today in a truncated version.) —J.F.

Miller, Hannah Elsas. *Films in the Classroom: A Practical Guide.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. $12.50. Addressed to teachers, librarians, administrators.

Millerson, Gerald. *Effective TV Production.* New York: Hastings House, 1976. $8.95. Introduction to planning and producing TV material.

Molina-Foix, Vicente. *New Cinema in Spain.* London: British Film Institute, 1977. A short (27-page) tracing of Spanish film production since the Civil War, with emphasis on political and bureaucratic obstacles posed by church and state. The book includes biographical sketches and filmographies of twenty-nine directors, conclusions from the 1955 Congress of Salamanca, censorship models from 1963 and 1975, a summary of the First International Congress of Film Schools (1967), and critical polls enumerating major Spanish films and directors. —J.F.

Monaco, James. *Alain Resnais.* New York: Oxford, 1979. Monaco's Resnais proves less awesomely formalist, more tongue-in-cheek than others. The author operates from a premise that *Hiroshima* and *Marienbad* gave false coloration to the director's image as it developed thereafter. *Je t'aime, je t'aime* is considered in far greater depth than elsewhere. One chapter describes unrealized projects in rewarding detail: Harry Dickson, 'Délivrez-nous du bien' (a nonchronological narrative built around deSade, permeated by the writer's obsessive narration), 'The Monster Maker' (Stan Lee's parodic soap opera adventure with pollution running rampant through New York streets). Exceptional photographs taken by Resnais for these projects are included, and the study profits from Monaco's own interviews with the director. —J.F.

_____, ed. *Media Culture: Television, Radio, Records, Books, Magazines, Newspapers, Movies.* New York: Delta, 1978. $4.95. An anthology, including an introduction and another piece by Monaco himself, on problems of structure, wheeling and dealing, advertising, personality, and—above and beyond all—money. Many of the articles are extremely readable. —E.C.

Morris, Peter. *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1895–1939.* Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978. $19.95 cloth, $7.95 paper. A reflective and meticulously researched history of film activity (almost all English-speaking) in Canada until John Grierson arrived in 1938 and turned everything

into new channels. As curator of the Canadian Film Archives from 1963 to 1975, Morris was an ideal author for this study, which is very readable and an important contribution to Canadian cultural history. —E.C.

Mueller, John. *Dance Film Directory: An Annotated and Evaluative Guide to Films on Ballet and Modern Dance.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton Book Co., 1979. $9.95.

Murphy, William T., ed. *Robert Flaherty: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $18.00. Biographical and critical introduction, synopses, credits, bibliography.

Murray, Edward. *Ten Film Classics: a Re-Viewing.* New York: Ungar, 1978. In short, critical appreciations, Murray discusses ten favorite films, ranging from *Potemkin* through *Ikiru* to *Bonnie and Clyde.* The essays read like thoughtful, organized, articulate lectures in a film appreciation course: origins, plot resumé (emphasizing visual detail), occasional generalizations about director (Truffaut), mode (exposé in *On The Waterfront*), or public response (*Bonnie and Clyde*). —J.F.

Nash, Mark. *Dreyer.* London: British Film Institute, 1977. Distributed by New York Zoetrope. Nash's book is a provocative application of Lacan and Kristeva to a broad body of film work. He is not interested in Dreyer the auteur, but the Dreyer texts as these provide a basis for investigating the viewer's psychic commitments to them, a dynamic of interchange between Dreyer characters, Dreyer audience and Dreyer *mise-en-scène.* Thus, *Michael* (1924) is discussed in terms of a continuing cycle of displacements of signifiers of desire (painter's subject, painting, English glasses, plays of looks) as these reinforce significations both of sexual objects and of sexual ambiguities. Anne's sexual repression in *Day of Wrath* is underlined by a "barred" lighting effect, but Nash is more interested in repression/containment of desire as a price society paid for stability of the bourgeois family. The diegesis of *Gertrud* is equated with hypnosis, a type of hysterical (in Freud's sense) discourse. An annotated filmography provides extended attention to early silents as well as discussing several documentary shorts Dreyer made during and after World War II. —J.F.

Nemeskürty, István. *Word and Image: History of the Hungarian Cinema.* Budapest: Corvina Press, 1974. With considerate perspective, the author notes salient moments in early Hungarian film, dating from its inception in 1912. *The Budapest Reporter* (1912) intermingled professional actors and candid documentations of city life. 1915 film writing parallels esthetic theory in France. Nationalized, socialist film production preceded that in the USSR if only until Horthy's counter-revolutionary white terror, which disseminated film-making personnel throughout Europe. *People of the Alps* (1942) is described as a major film event, like *Professor Hannibal* (1957) in the re-nationalized industry. Broadened coverage highlights contemporary directors: Gaál, Szabó, Kovacs, Makk and Janscó. A list of features made between 1945 and 1974 is appended, and the book contains an exceptional city symphony script—written by Moholy-Nagy in 1921-22, accompanied by diagrams and drawings. —J.F.

Newcomb, Horace, ed. *Television: The Critical View* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford, 1979. $5.95. Twenty-nine essays.

Nizhny, Vladimir: *Lessons with Eisenstein* (with a new introduction by Dwight Macdonald). New York: Da Capo, 1979. $5.95. Reissue of a most interesting text.

O'Connor, John E. and Martin A. Jackson, eds. *American History/American Film: Interpreting the Hollywood Image.* New York: Ungar, 1979. $12.50 cloth, $5.95 paper. An important complement to other social histories of the movies (Jowett, Sklar), this anthology combines detailed historical analyses of the business and financial mechanisms of film production and the socio-economic milieu of the films' reception with perceptive discussions of individual films. The editors want to encourage us to "reconsider the Hollywood film as a valid and respectable subject for research," maintaining that historians can learn much about social and political conditions by examining theatrical feature films. These stimulating and well-researched essays admirably achieve the two-fold aim of the anthology—to analyze the ways in which each film both documents American social history and illustrates the development of the American film industry. This is an inspiring example of the possibilities of combining meticulous historical research with close analysis of films. —SANDY FLITTERMAN

Outerbridge, David E. *Without Makeup: Liv Ullmann, A Photobiography.* New York: William Morrow and Co., 1979. $15.00. This book has many lovely photos of Ullmann (including some from private life and some from films or plays utterly unknown here) but its substance is a lengthy, detailed series of interviews on the performer's craft: subtle, matter-of-fact, emotional. A major contribution to the renewed interest in what actors and actresses give to films. —E.C.

Parish, James Robert. *Hollywood on Hollywood.* Metuchen. N.J. and London: The Scarecrow Press, 1978. $17.50. Credits, stories, and brief comments about films on the movie industry and its environs. Another of Scarecrow's listings, this one runs from *Making Motion Pictures: a Day in the Vitagraph Studio* to *The Last Tycoon.* DeWitt Bodeen's Foreword is enter-

taining (*Souls for Sale* was his rite of passage), although he disagrees with the authors on some dates, of *A Girl's Folly, The Extra Girl, Doubling for Romeo.* —J.F.

_____, and Michael R. Pitts. *The Great Gangster Pictures.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1976. Credits and short discussions, usually with review excerpts and authors's judgments. Generic categorizations and the urge toward inclusion sometimes encourage incongruous appearances *(Guys and Dolls, Breathless)* and quibbling. If Godard, why not Melville? If *Sherlock Holmes,* why not *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*? Estimations tend toward historical accuracy as a measure of worth, e.g. *Bonnie and Clyde* was unrealistic. —J.F.

Peary, Danny, ed. *Close-Ups: The Movie Star Book.* New York: Workman Publishing, 1978. $8.95 paper. Don't be deceived by the title; this is, in reality, a useful, interesting book, in fact, every bit as useful and interesting in its way as Leslie Halliwell's *Filmgoer's Companion,* a classic now in its sixth edition. If it's un-hyped info on the biggies you're looking for, look here. *Close-Ups* bills itself as "Intimate profiles of movie stars by their co-stars, directors, screenwriters and friends" and that's exactly what it is. Though occasionally something inexplicable will slip in (William Saroyan on Phyllis Brooks?), by and large this is a collection of solid, professional essays on the stars and cult figures you're likely to care about by people who know. It's 95% by American writers on American stars in American movies, but so long as you have another place to look to discover if that was *really* Satyajit Ray in Werner Fassbinder's *8-1/2,* you ought to be happy. Profusely and intelligently illustrated.
—KEITH BURR

Peary, Gerald and Roger Shatzkin, eds. *The Modern American Novel and the Movies.* New York: Ungar, 1979. $14.50 cloth, $6.95 paper. A follow-up to its more sedate predecessor (*The Classic . . .*), this anthology's ambitious introduction makes the essays included in this volume somewhat of a disappointment. The editors intend their book as a "friendly corrective" to the psychoanalytic and ideological analyses informed by European critical thought; they promise discussions of the "*process* of reaching the film product," a product which is "built dialectically from prior texts." Few of the essays put forth such discussions, despite interesting articles by some of the most exciting new film critics—and some standard ones. The essays fail to deal with the fundamental problem: novels and films are composed of different signifying materials—the ways in which each produces meaning are vastly different. Changes in endings, omissions, predictable forms of depoliticization, visual equivalents of prose style—these are only superficial ways of describing differences between novels and films. Real analyses would have to consider each text—novel and film—as a specific system which produces its effects in a particular way. Nonetheless, despite the book's overall failure to live up to the claim made by its editors, there are many individual essays which contain perceptive discussions. And the mammoth job of documentation done by the editors makes this book a useful source for "everything you always wanted to know about what's been written on novels and films." —SANDY FLITTERMAN

Pepitone, Lena and William Stadiem. *Marilyn Monroe: Confidential.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979. $9.95. Affectionate remembrances by Marilyn's personal maid and confidante. —E.C.

Perisic, Zoran. *The Animation Stand.* New York: Hastings House, 1976.

Pickard, Roy. *Hollywood Gold: The Award Winning Movies.* New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1979. $14.95 cloth, $9.95 paper. Credits and synopses.

Pilkington, William T., and Don Graham, eds. *Western Movies.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1979. $13.95. A collection of recent essays on Western themes.

Place, Janey Ann. *The Non-Western Films of John Ford.* Secaucus, N.J. Citadel Press, 1979. Handsomely illustrated and designed, this dissertation-for-once-re-conceived-in-graceful-prose offers concise summaries and thoughtful evaluations of the sound films from *Pilgrimage* (1933) to *Seven Women* (1966). Students whose perspective on *Young Mr. Lincoln* stems out of *Cahiers du Cinéma* may have special interest in that essay here. Joshua Logan (*Movie Stars, Real People, and Me.* New York. Delacorte, 1978) says Ford thought *Mr. Roberts* a "homosexual play" and stayed drunk through its shooting until he was relieved. That sounds more believable than Place's ascription of gall-bladder trouble to the old man. —J.F.

Poague, Leland. *The Cinema of Ernst Lubitsch: The Hollywood Films.* Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978. $12.00. The sprightliness of Lubitsch is not too well served by Poague's rather dogged analysis, but his accounts of the plot-character-and-theme development of the films is thorough and thoughtful. Filmography. —E.C.

[Practicing Law Institute.] *Legal and Business Problems of Motion Picture Industry, Packaging for Television and Motion Pictures,* and *Legal and Business Problems of Financing Motion Pictures* ($20 each from Practicing Law Institute, 810 Seventh Avenue, New York NY 10019). Three practically oriented course handbooks for attorneys, agents, producers, and others

engaged in the complex agreements that go along with film and TV production and distribution. —E.C.

Prendergast, Roy. M. *A Neglected Art: A Critical Study of Music in Film.* New Yokr: New York University Press, 1977. An excellent study, emphasizing case-history examples of Hollywood scoring and concentrating upon significant composers such as Steiner, Tiomkin, Bernstein, Raskin, Hermann and Rozsa. While European work is cited, only Prokofiev wins real coverage. Technical and theoretical material is sketchy, the latter entirely elaborating on an Aaron Copland *Times Magazine* article. The Bibliography is weak on periodicals. For something more comprehensive, see *Cinema Journal* (Spring 1978). Prendergast does not suffer anti-Americanism gladly. Hanns Eisler's *Composing for the Films* is "testy and relatively valueless." And one may quarrel with some of Prendergast's pronouncements: it seems unlikely that "D.W. Griffith had studied composition in his home town of Louisville, Kentucky." —J.F.

Preston, Jack (J.P. Buschlen). *Heil! Hollywood.* New York and London: Garland, 1978. This 1939 novel has casting couches, conniving agents, murder, a couple of warm, generous producers, nude swimming, vicious newspaper campaigns, a wave of fascist anti-Semitism, and true love. —J.F.

Price, Barbara Anne and Theodore Price. *Federico Fellini: An Annotated International Bibliography.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978. $11.00. Biographical and critical survey, credits, synopses, bibliography.

Ravage, John W. *Television: The Director's Viewpoint.* Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1978. $16.50. Mainly interviews from the trenches. (Ravage: What should, in a hypothetical sense, a director have to say about content? Joan Darling: In television it's impractical. It's the way it's set up now. It's impractical for the director to have any relationship to the content . . .") This is basic information for anybody wishing to write seriously about television, and it is not *quite* altogether desperate. A tiny residual defensive *auteurism* persists: "Directors take great pride in being able to achieve small victories over those who seem less sensitive. . . . Admittedly, the joys and successes are small." —E.C.

Rawlinson, Arthur and Dorothy Farnum. *Jew Süss.* New York and London: Garland, 1978. A reprint of Gaumont-British's 1935 film script. The movie was produced by Malcom Balcon, directed by Lothar Mendes, and featured Conrad Veidt (the Jew), Frank Vosper (Karl Alexander), and Cedric Hardwicke (Rabbi Gabriel). Josef Süss Oppenheimer rises in wealth and status through his affiliation with the Duke of Württemberg, a Duchy in 1730. The Duke's attentions precipitate Jew Süss's daughter Naomi to suicide. The Jew's rage, vented in heavy taxations, causes his downfall. In fact, Jew Süss was born a Christian, but even threatened with death he will not renounce the faith. Leon Feuchtwanger's novel combines Sydney Carton nobility with Dickens sentimentality. The infamous Nazi version came in 1940. Production stills and set sketches. —J.F.

Ray, Sydney F. *The Lens in Action.* New York: Hastings House, 1976. $8.95. Survey of practical optics.

Reed, Rex. *Travolta to Keaton.* New York: William Morrow and Co., 1979. $9.95. The critic you love to hate interviews the stars you love. With the usual surprises (Susan Sarandon majored in military strategy; Burt Reynolds worships Elia Kazan). —E.C.

Reid, Alison, and P.M. Evanchuck. *Richard Leiterman.* Ottawa: Canadian Film Institute, 1978. $5.50. Study of an immensely talented cameraman, best known for his work on *A Married Couple,* who has moved into direction. With extensive interview and filmography. —E.C.

Ritsko, Alan. J. *Lighting for Location Motion Pictures.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1979. $16.95. An excellent, practical guide to the difficult lighting situations outside studios, in which an ingenious director of photography, gaffer, and electrician can make the difference between an amateurish-looking film and a work of visual art snatched from the implacable chaos of visual reality: flickering fluorescents, immovable objects, fluctuating voltage. . . . —E.C.

Robinson, J.F. and P.H. Beards. *Using Videotape.* New York: Hastings House, 1976. $7.95. Elementary introduction.

Rohmer, Eric. *L'Organisation de l'espace dans le "Faust" de Murnau.* Paris: Union Genérale d'Editions, 1977. No price given. This brief but ingenious study was Rohmer's doctoral dissertation. We hope to translate a part of it in this journal shortly. Murnau's use of *espace pictural, espace architectural,* and *espace filmique* are analyzed with the help of floor plans, shot sketches, etc. —E.C.

Rivette, Jacques. (Jonathan Rosenbaum, ed.) *Rivette: Texts and Interviews.* London: British Film Institute, 1977. "The film must be over before its reading (its re-reading) can be started," Rivette writes, "the telling of the dream must be finished so that the analysis, setting aside all non-literal matter, can discover the recurring, genuinely significant elements, together with the slips of the tongue, the masks, the metamorphoses, the censorships." Rivette's own style seizes on exigencies of this process; he amplifies the slips of the tongue, the masks, the censorships. This admirable

collection of thoughtful interviews and of Rivette's own film reviews should clarify the director to the English-speaking world. —J.F.

Rosenfeldt, Diane, ed. *Ken Russell: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $14.00. Biographical and critical introduction, credits, synopses, bibliography.

_____, ed. *Richard Lester: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $15.00. Biographical and critical introduction, credits, synopses, bibliography.

Rosow, Eugene. *Born To Lose: The Gangster Film in America.* New York: Oxford, 1978. $15.95. The first three-quarters of Rosow's book are a gem. He elaborates Warshow's cues, and spells out movie gangland origins in American industrial history. Underworld codes and strategies are located among the nineteenth-century Robber Barons, in film a popular expression of the society's developing suspicion toward corporate industrial capital. Rags-to-riches success is summarized in a survey that ranges from pulpit to pulp. The immigrant's city is marvelously encapsulated, largely through Jacob Riis photographs of New York. Rosow's capsule history of American film appears to be digressive until we realize that he will overlay movie rackets onto the movie racket. From *The Musketeers of Pig Alley,* films are concisely, usefully described. But, sadly, Part IV truncates 40 years, by far the greater part of movie history, into a pell-mell trip through dates and titles. —J.F.

Rothel, David. *The Singing Cowboys.* South Brunswick and London: A.S. Barnes and Thomas Yoseloff, 1978. A loping labor of love from an author who remembers when thirty-five cents bought the ticket, popcorn, and a soda pop. He interviewed the old posse (Autry, Ritter, Rogers, Dean, Wakely, Hale, Allen), and this material contains a mine of anecdotes about Republic, Monogram and Producers Releasing Corporation. Each had its own hierarchy. Roy Rogers could get a $300,000 budget and a three-week schedule; Rex Allen had to settle for $50,000 and five days. Contains filmographies, discographies, index. —J.F.

Rowlands, Avril. *Script Continuity and the Production Secretary in Film and TV.* New York: Hastings House, 1977. $6.95. Based on British conditions.

[Royal Film Archive of Belgium] *The Most Important and Misappreciated American Films Since the Beginning of the Cinema.* Brussels: Royal Film Archive, 1978. $20.00. *The Property Man* (Chaplin, 1914), *The Pet* (McCay, 1917), *It's the Old Army Game* (Fields, 1926), *Battle of the Sexes* (Griffith, 1928), *The Last Warning* (Leni, 1929), *Dr. Bull* (Ford, 1933), *The Affairs of Cellini* (La Cava, 1934), *Mark of the Vampire* (Browning, 1935), *The Devil Commands* (1941), *Bad Men of Missouri* (1941), *The Boogie Man Will Get You* (Lorre-Karloff, 1942), *Time to Kill* (Lloyd Nolan, 1942), *The Mad Ghoul* (1943), *Mexican Hayride* (Abbott & Costello, 1948), *Siren of Atlantis* (1948), *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (Hitchcock, 1956), *The Monolith Monsters* (1957), *Little Shop of Horrors* (1960), *Dark Intruder* (1965). These are some of the more interesting titles that you will *not* find in this volume's list of 2,327 American films. The above films are thus definitely "misappreciated"—and undeservedly so, though none of them perhaps qualifies as resoundingly "important." But then you already know what the "important" American films are, and you will find them all dutifully listed here, by 203 international contributors. Back once again are that Welles classic (no, not *The Stranger*), that Chaplin silent, the Keaton, those two Griffiths. In such over-familiar company, it's refreshing to see a few votes for a film like Lewton's spellbinding *The Seventh Victim,* a lone one for his *Isle of the Dead,* and four for the 1932 gem *The Trial of Vivienne Ware.* But what point is there is yet again trotting out *The Magnificent Ambersons* (that other Welles classic), *The Scarlet Empress, The General,*

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—DON WILLIS

Samuelson, David W. *Motion Picture Camera and Lighting Equipment: Choice and Technique.* New York: Focal Press, 1979. $8.95 paper. Especially useful on dollies, car supports for cameras, and other production information. —E.C.

_____. *Motion Picture Camera Techniques.* New York: Focal Press, 1979. $8.95. Full of handy hints (how to make studio stars shine—you use Scotchlite) as well as basic production information. —E.C.

Sarris, Andrew. *Politics and Cinema* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978). Columns from the *Village Voice*, supplemented by three articles published elsewhere and by introductory materials. Sarris's politics (centrist) and view of recent film study (suspicious) are out-front. The "Semiotics and Cinema" essay epitomizes several facets: facetious journalist, uneasy academician, felicitous stylist, and capable of intricately winning film descriptions, as with the striptease in *Nashville.* —J.F.

Schroeder, Don and Gary Lare. *Audiovisual Equipment and Materials: A Basic Repair and Maintenance Manual.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1979. $8.50.

Schuth, H. Wayne. *Mike Nichols.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $8.95. Nichols is a stronger directorial presence than generally acknowledged, and not merely a talented theatrical *metteur-en-scène.* This study has some interesting ideas about Nichols's use of costume colors, and somewhat less to say about his camera style; it makes an earnest effort to clarify the over-all themes of Nichols's work. —E.C.

Sitney, P. Adams, ed. *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism.* New York: NYU Press, 1978. $24.50 cloth, $12.50 paper. A valuable compendium of theoretical and critical essays, some of which appear for the first time in English, this anthology is full of important material on and by certain avant-garde film-makers. The trouble is, Sitney literally "creates" an avant-garde through his selection of some film-makers and the exclusion of others. His 40-page introduction takes us on a brief excursion through the tradition he's defined: Dziga Vertov and Eisenstein (the first appearance in English of Eisenstein's extremely important "On the Question of a Materialist Approach to Form"), Epstein and Dulac (again, important translations, though regrettably brief), Deren, Brakhage, Kubelka, Snow, Landow, Frampton (to name only a few who are included in the anthology). Sitney's very brief descriptions of the films and capsule critical pronouncements ("*Wavelength* reformulated the central analogy of the American avant-garde: *the camera as a model of cognition* . . .") make up the introduction. The inclusion of lectures by film-makers revives an old tradition of the lecture circuit, started by Maya Deren. Critical works include seminal essays (e.g., Michelson on Snow, Koch on Warhol) plus a 50-page opus by Sitney himself on autobiography in avant-garde film.

Curiously, it is an idealist assertion that forms the conceptual framework of the book—"Within the avant-garde cinema where the exigencies of the marketplace have no power in determining the content and form of films, the currents of film history cross over one another with elaborate complexity." As if avant-garde film-makers operated in some pure artistic realm, free from ideology, not to mention economics. Surely Sitney has heard of the economics of the art world, and of avant-garde commecialism. Nonetheless, the inclusion of many primary sources and fundamental texts about avant-garde film-making makes this an important anthology.

—SANDY FLITTERMAN

_____. *Visionary Film: the American Avant-Garde 1943–1978.* 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979. Sitney's second edition adjusts very occasional issues of fact, omits the Gregory Markopoulos material, and addends a seventies chapter. Markopoulos withdrew permission to quote extensively from his theoretical writings, a somewhat problematical rationale for wholesale exclusion when the author says he has not revised his estimate of the film-maker. Thus chapter five disappears, although, curiously, the new chapter five (previously chapter six) continues to refer back to its former predecessor as if the latter were still there. Which is not to say that the references do not apply equally to chapter four.

Introducing the new material, Duchamp's *Anemic Cinema* is very effectively described and then proposed to constitute a theoretical genesis for much seventies

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work because of its maddening, irreconcilable word/picture conjunctions. What follows updates Sitney's previously-discussed film-makers: Landow, Frampton, Snow, Brakhage, Broughton, and Gehr. The exclusive addition of Yvonne Rainer and Robert Beavers is sure to alienate a new generation of independent film-makers, but Sitney has always operated with a selective pantheon, a solitary likeness to his old *Film Culture* colleague Andrew Sarris. Broughton and Brakhage excepted, most recent work would appear by the author's description to constitute variations on a series of polarities located in Snow's *Rameau's Nephew:* picture/sound, script/performance, direction/acting, writing/speaking, word/thing. Significantly, Romanticism reappears only once in this section, and that with reference to Brakhage. —J.F.

Slide, Anthony. *Aspects of American Film History Prior to 1920.* Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1978. $7.50. A series of essays on little-known directors, studios, and early stars, together with miscellaneous esoterica, most of it strange, and some conceivably useful as well as amusing. (Kalem distributed several tons of dirt so that patrons of *The Colleen Bawn* could literally stand on Irish soil, for instance.) —E.C.

Snow, Michael. *Cover To Cover.* Halifax: The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975; New York: New York University Press, 1975). Photographs, most often one per page faced by a reverse shot of the same subject or a variation thereof; thus, a man outside a closed door and the closed door from inside the room. Sequentially we see the man open the door (left) and appear in the opening (right). Progressively, Snow moves through illusion-shattering disclosures. No longer obscured by the figure or the door, two photographers, who had seemingly shot the previous pictures, now photograph one another. Then a thumb appears, informing us that we are viewing a photograph of a photograph; its reverse side is white, framed by the thumb's opposing fingers. As we turn pages, the jerky, evolving narrative combines a look of both minimalist film design and the perspective-shifting panels by Rick Griffin and other cartoonists out of *Zap Comix.* —J.F.

Sobel, Raoul and David Francis. *Chaplin: Genesis of a Clown.* New York: Horizon Press, 1978. $12.95 cloth; $5.95 paper. This is a very sensitive reading of Chaplin's work 1914-1917, placing it in the context of a close analysis of the curiously vague autobiography and what can be otherwise discerned about Chaplin's early life. Brings to bear much interesting material on influences from *commedia dell'arte,* British music-hall tradition, and fellow film-makers, most notably Mabel Normand. In the top rank of books about Chaplin, despite its limited time period. —E.C.

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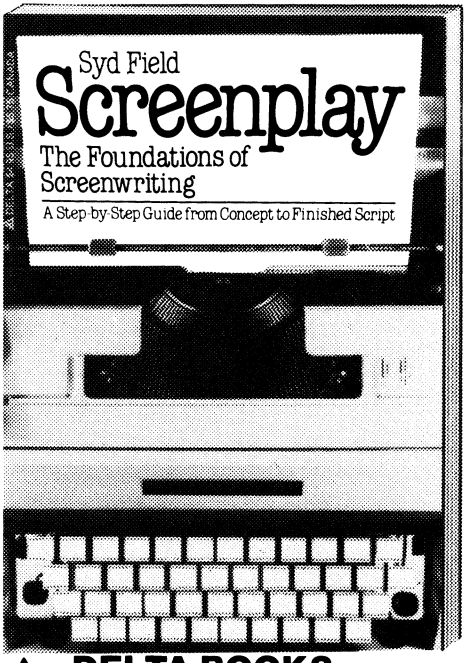

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Solomon, Jon. *The Ancient World in the Cinema.* Cranbury, NJ: A.S. Barnes, 1978. $19.95. This is a sometimes archly over-written yet learned and entertaining account of the puzzles film-makers have faced

in attempting to re-create the ancient world. Full of illustrations, some campy and some archaeological. Particularly nice is the discussion of Fellini's *Satyricon*, which Solomon defends from fellow classicist Gilbert Highet: Fellini did his homework, all right, but was "creatively imitative." Indexed, and with a handy chronology of historical events with relevant film titles attached. (The reign of Nero and the Trojan War come out neck and neck in number of titles.) —E.C.

Sorlin, Pierre. *Sociologie du cinéma.* Paris: Editions Aubier Montaigne, 1977. No price given.

Spoto, Donald. *Camerado: Hollywood and the American Man.* New York: New American Library, 1978. Ostensibly a study of "mythic stencils, against whom the ideas of one's youth, adolescence, and maturity—ideas about man and about oneself—are patterned . . . ." Spoto's book emerges as an easygoing, conversational rundown of major Hollywood male stars, described in the context of plot synopses. Chapters are grouped under categories such as The Common Man, Sex Appeal, and Comedy. The author's affection for Hitchcock enlists *Notorious* to do double duty, both for Claude Rains and Cary Grant. There is a nice description of Hawks's little known *Born To Love* (1927). —J.F.

_____. *Stanley Kramer Film Maker.* New York: Putnam's, 1978. On first impression of title and format, the reader suspects that Spoto means to do a Hitchcock on Kramer. In fact, the book balances praise with denigration. If one continues to match his taste with the author's, the battle is not constant. Equal attention rests on Kramer-produced, non-directed projects, with personal interview material supplementing production accounts. —J.F.

Stabiner, Karen. *Limited Engagements.* New York: Seaview Books, 1979. $8.95. An update on *What Makes Sammy Run:* life in the Hollywood cricles where status anxiety is the dominant if not the only emotion. The writing is observant, the characters tedious. —E.C.

Steinberg, Cobbett. *Reel Facts: The Movie Book of Records.* New York: Vintage, 1978. $3.95. The great bulk of this volume is devoted to award lists (down to the *Lampoon's* "Movie Worsts") but it also includes some interesting information on box-office performance, studio release figures (and profits), star salaries, etc. With a section on the original Hollywood Code and its revisions. —E.C.

Stock,Dennis. *James Dean Revisited.* New York: Viking Penguin, 1978. $15.95 (Viking); $5.95 (Penguin). Stock hung around with Dean, visited his Midwest home town with him, and took candid shots at various junctures of his short and tantalizing life. Many of them are beautiful and appropriately melancholy. With adulatory but brief connective text. —E.C.

Stubbs, John C., ed. with Constance D. Markey and Mark Lenzini. *Federico Fellini: A Guide to References and Resources.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1978. $30.00. Biographical and critical survey, credits, synopses, bibliography.

Suid, Lawrence H. *Guts & Glory: Great American War Movies.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1978. $12.95 cloth; $6.95 paper. A meticulous study of the production background, script strategies, and public reception of war films from *The Big Parade* to *Apocalypse Now.* A great deal of attention is given to the process by which the US military exercises influence on scripts, by giving or withholding "cooperation" often worth lots of money. —E.C.

Swallow, Norman. *Eisenstein: A Documentary Portrait.* New York: Dutton, 1977. Eisensteinian hagiography is little changed by Swallow's work, but its contours emerge more clearly because of new interview material. This includes such sources as Grigori Kozintsev, King Vidor, and the boy whose mother carried him up the Odessa steps. Some incidents are marvelous: Stalin appearing in the editing rooms to check *October's* Trotsky footage, Eisenstein picking Nevsky as a film subject because none of the "consultants" would know the period, Eisenstein and Tisse arguing over the order of reels while projecting *Old and New.* Grierson says Eisenstein composed his silent films in symphonic movements because theaters each housed a single projector. Scripts were designed to rest between reel changes. —J.F.

Thomas, Bob. *Joan Crawford: A Biography by Bob Thomas.* New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978. $10.95. The career side of "Mommy darling," with a few asides about her acknowledged failure as a mother, which Thomas attributes to her own "Dickensian" childhood. —E.C.

Thorpe, Frances, ed. *International Index to Film Periodicals 1976: An Annotated Guide.* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978. $35.00. Essential document for any library with a serious film collection; indexes all the major and many minor film journals. —E.C.

Tolkien, J. R. R. [text] and Arthur Rankin, Jr. [illustrations from the film]. *The Hobbit: or There and Back Again.* New York: Abrams, 1977. $35.00.

Trojan, Judith and Nadine Covert, comp. *16mm Distribution.* New York: Educational Film Library Association, Inc., 1977. These major papers from a 1976 EFLA and IFS Conference with greatly needed (and often ignored) facts. Topics include self-distribution,

cooperatives, university distribution, and a financial analysis of 16mm distribution. Of particular utility is a chapter on contract negotiations by Frederick Wiseman. For the record, the total of nontheatrical rentals in 1973 equalled about two-thirds of Bloomingdale's gross in the same year. —J.F.

Truffaut, François. *The Films in My Life.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1978. Originally published as *Les Films de ma vie.* 1975. "When I was a film critic, I wanted above all to *convince,* probably because, having no idea of the real problems a filmmaker faces, I was instinctively trying to convince myself first of all about what was good and what was not." This collection, largely dating from 1954 to 1958 with some later pieces, is predominantly appreciative, infuriatingly infused by polemical demands on the reader to accept or to reject any film because of some arbitrary distinction Truffaut imposes. At least this happens unless one accepts the author on other terms—a reviewer with the sensibility, if not the time and space, of a critic, a writer generous with enthusiasm, infatuated by his subject. —J.F.

Ustinov, Peter. *Dear Me.* New York: Penguin, 1979. $2.95. As one might expect, a witty if wandering autobiography, but it has surprisingly little in it about Ustinov's films. (He does tell an astounding story about Trevelyan, the British censor, conniving to get *Billy Budd* transferred from one distributor to another by giving it a deliberate X.) —E.C.

Vasudev, Aruna. *Liberty and License in the Indian Cinema.* New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1978. Vasudev traces film censorship through India's twentieth century, in process outlining the region's movie history as well as British self-regulation; its rationale dominated India through the time of colonialism. In exaggerated detail, Indian censorship mirrors the characteristics of other countries: moral, political and sexual proprietorship by one group exercised over a broad, heterogeneous audience. *Variety, Sadie Thompson,* and *Potemkin* were banned outright, along with *Orphans of the Storm* and *Broken Blossoms*! The time of Mrs. Nehru's government was one of particular sternness; India produced 507 features in 1976. —J.F.

Vermilye, Jerry. *Ida Lupino.* New York: Pyramid, 1977. $1.95. Rehearses the bare facts of Lupino's life and films, but throws no real light on the career of this most productive woman director to date. —E.C.

Walker, Alexander. *The Shattered Silents: How the Talkies Came to Stay.* London: Elm Tree Books, 1978.

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Drawing effectively on period research from *Variety* and on Geduld's *The Birth of the Talkies*, Walker writes enthusiastically about the 1926-1930 transition, with special emphasis on the earliest all-talkies. Curiously, the book pays no attention to Western Electric's earlier experimental sound shorts made with musical acts (a Eubie Blake-Noble Sissle, for example, dates from the early twenties). Less excusably, the author ignores research and publications by J. Douglas Gomery. Walker should ask any American black what offay (sic, p. 191) really means. —J.F.

_____. *Superstars*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1978. $9.95 paper. An oversize format picture book, which somehow manages to make Sophia Loren look ordinary, but includes some telling shots. —E.C.

Welsch, Janice R. *Film Archetypes*. New York: Arno, 1978. Drawing on postwar Hollywood, Welsch refines more customary polarities (mother/whore) to describe "archetypes" of mother, daughter, sister and mistress. In that order, her vehicles are Elizabeth Taylor, Audrey Hepburn/Grace Kelly, Doris Day/Debbie Reynolds, and Marilyn Monroe/Kim Novak. The film career of each is processed through content analysis (e.g., genres, marital status, character names) for every major role to support the ascriptions. —J.F.

Wilson, Michael (screenplay), and Deborah Silverton Rosenfelt (commentary). *Salt of the Earth*. Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press, 1978. $4.95. The screenplay plus commentary of this landmark feminist and politically committed film is a very useful text from which to explore the issues surrounding militant cinema. Rosenfelt's extensive documentation situates the film-script within several contexts: labor history (the roots of class and race antagonism in New Mexico), Hollywood (McCarthyism and the social and political context of the film's production), making the film (the collaboration between the people of New Mexico and the film-makers/workers). Paul Jarrico's chronology of events and contemporary accounts documenting the opposition give a chilling picture of the incredible pressure against production and distribution of the film. In her commentary, Rosenfelt attempts to deal with the feminist questions raised by the film: To what extent did the development of class and feminist consciousness depicted in the film carry over into the daily lives of the people? How effective was the film (or can any film be) in combatting the strength of traditional assumptions about women's roles? Is it possible to sustain heightened consciousness without a specific struggle which foregrounds the issues? For a theoretical examination of these issues more detailed analysis of the film-text itself is needed: this book provides a comprehensive place from which to begin.
—SANDY FLITTERMAN

Wistrich, Enid. *Film Censorship Explored*. London: Marion Boyars Ltd., 1978. $4.95. A thoughtful discussion by a member of a British censorship board, focused on the British experience but also including such data as the fall in Danish sex offenses since restrictions were removed on sexual material in 1969. Generally anti-censorship; proposes a limited voluntary system, somewhat akin to the US "ratings." —E.C.

Wong, Eugene Franklin. *On Visual Media Racism: Asians in the American Motion Pictures*. New York: Arno, 1978. One of Arno's dissertations series. Readers may quarrel with Wong's inferences toward films like *Chinatown* and *McCabe and Mrs. Miller*, but his study is thorough, painstaking (including 125 films viewed), and fascinating. Background is established in nineteenth-century history, fiction and theatrical melodrama, although attention rests around 1930-1975 movies, with special attention to Moto, Chan, and Fu Manchu. A black reader might raise a nonepicanthicfold eye at ". . . Griffith's films were less demonstrative of white racism than most" (p. 77). —J.F.

Zuker, Joel Steward. *Ralph Steiner: Filmmaker and Still Photographer*. New York: Arno, 1978. Steiner's films commence in 1929 with H_2O and pick up during the Group Theater agit/prop fantasies of *Pie in the Sky* and *Cafe Universal* (lost). His experience with Frontier Films (*People of the Cumberland*) was frustrating. *The Plow That Broke the Plains* and *The City* contain Steiner's best known cinematography. He did time in Hollywood, and returned to perception exercises, abstract-inflected, in recent years. Zuker's NYU dissertation includes descriptions of little-known projects like *Panther Woman of the Needle Trades* and *Dance Film* (both 1931) as well as a lengthy explication of *Pie in the Sky* and a reconstruction of *Cafe Universal* segments. Sympathetic to the Left and uncomfortable with Communist rules and rhetoric, Steiner seems to exemplify the thirties' temporary allegiance between graphic art and politics. —J.F.

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